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THE  
LIVES OF THE PLAYERS



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LIVES OF THE PLAYERS

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*“The Life of Byron,” “Annals of the Parish,” etc.*

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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ALTHOUGH this compilation will probably be among the most amusing books in the language, still the author can lay claim to very little merit. The subject was suggested by a literary friend, and he had only to select from abundant materials.

In one respect he may not be deemed undeserving of some indulgent consideration. The world is well aware that many of the early adventures of those who in riper life have added to our harmless pleasures, are difficult to describe in such a manner as not to render some of the most entertaining objectionable. His object, however, was to produce a parlour-book, and the rule he prescribed to himself was to introduce nothing into it that would not be tolerated on the stage by the most fastidious. In this he is

sensible that he may be questioned by those liquorish epicures who care not for the woodcock without the trail.

The nature of his task necessarily directed him to disregard dates and minute circumstances, save in a few epochal events, and to study the general appearance rather than those particular markings which distinguish personal from historical portraiture. His pencil has been withheld from warts, scars, and freckles, but the nobler features have been painted with industrious care. With several individuals he has perhaps not failed, and where he ventures to offer a judgment either on defects, talents, or degrees of excellence, he has not only endeavoured to be correct in weighing the testimony of others, but well supported where he has found himself constrained to differ from received opinions.

It will depend on the reception which this work may receive from the public, whether more shall be added. In the mean time, the author cannot omit to acknowledge the obligations he is under for access to the dramatic collections of Mr. Mathews and Mr. Winstone,



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which, though in some respects different, are each more valuable to histrionic biography, particularly the latter, than the works which relate to the lives of the players in the British Museum. He cannot also but acknowledge the politeness with which he was invited to examine a collection of original letters in the London Institution. His opportunities have therefore been such as to enable him to give a fair general view of the most important characters, and in doing so he has studied less to echo the judgment of others, than to be firm and impartial in his own.



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# THE LIVES

OF

# THE PLAYERS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE notion that the English Stage has been indebted to no one so much as to Sir William Davenant, originated when the state of the theatre in Shakspeare's time was no longer recollected. It has been propagated by Malone, who was evidently not versed in the antiquity of the performed drama, and by Dr. Drake, in his ponderous *Shakspeare and his Times*, who has not investigated the subject with the same commendable zeal that he has done topics of inferior importance. For, in treating of the furniture of the stage, and arguing that the scenery was better and more appropriate than Mr. Malone was disposed to allow, the Doctor has not adverted to his own reasoning with respect to the masques and pageants occasionally performed for the entertainment of the court. These gorgeous spectacles were completely theatrical in their nature, and only not dramatic because they involved no plot. The different companies of actors were, it is true, not likely to be at so much expense as the courtiers in their exhibitions; but it should be recollected that the actors, in Shakspeare's time, were generally in the pay of some of the nobility,\* and it is not probable that the patron of the player withheld his munificence from the decorations of the theatre. The reverse should be inferred; besides, in all probability, the ornaments of the courtly masques and pageants were disposed of to the theatres in the same manner as the wardrobes of the London houses, in our own time, are sometimes recruited from

\* Sir Robert Lane's company, 1572; Earl of Leicester's company was incorporated in 1574; in the same year Lord Clinton's; Lord Warwick's and the Lord Chamberlain's 1572; the Earl of Sussex 1576; the Lord Howard, 1577; Earl of Essex 1578; the Lord Strange, 1579; and the same year Earl of Derby; the Lord Admiral, 1591; the Earl of Hartford 1592; the Lord Pembroke 1593; and at the close of her Majesty's reign, the Earl of Worcester had in his pay a company of theatrical performers.

cast-off court-dresses. If I am correct in this conjecture, we may form some idea of the style of the scenery with which the plays of Shakspeare were performed by looking at Ben Jonson's *Hymenæal Masque*; indeed the note is too curious and too apposite to be omitted.

"Here the upper part of the scene, which was all of clouds, and artificially to swell and ride like the rack, began to open, and the air clearing, in the top thereof was discovered Juno sitting on a throne, supported by two beautiful peacocks; her attire rich, and like a queen; a white diadem on her head, from whence descended a veil, and that bound by a fascia of several coloured silks, set with all sorts of jewels, and raised on the top with lilies and roses; in her right hand she held a sceptre, in the other a timbrel; at her golden feet the hide of a lion was placed; round about her the spirits of the air in several colours making music; above her the region of fire with a continual motion was seen to whirl circularly, and Jupiter standing on the top brandishing his thunder; beneath her the rainbow Iris, and on the two sides eight ladies attired richly, and alike in the most celestial colours, who represented her powers, as she is the governess of marriage."

Here we have scenery, dresses, and machinery, as appropriate as in any spectacle that has been produced in our own time at Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden. Moreover, Coryate, in his *Crudities*, published in 1611, writing from Venice in 1608, in describing the theatre, says—"The house is very beggarly and base, in comparison of our stately play-houses in England; neither can their actors compare with us for apparel, show, and music."

But in addition to this proof, I would add—

"The order and signification of the dumb show" before the fourth act of the venerable tragedy of *Gorboduc*, 1st. "The music of howebries began to play; during which there came forth from under the stage, as though out of hell, three furies—Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, clad in black garments, sprinkled with blood and flames; their bodies girt with snakes, their heads spread with serpents instead of hair, the one bearing in her hand a snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning firebrand, each driving before them a king and a queen, which, moved by furies, unnaturally had slain their own children. The names of the kings and queens were these:—Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambyses, Althea. After that the Furies and these had passed about the stage thrice, they departed, and then the music ceased."

This performance took place in the course of the year in which Shakspeare was born. Those who tell us that Shakspeare's plays were performed in front of an old blanket, with a label on it, to inform the audience when the scene lay in Rome or in London, may as well tell us that Burleigh House, one of the noblest yet in England, erected in the days of Shakspeare, is of lath and plaster, covered with thatch.

The drama in England arose much in the same way as it did in Greece. The strollers, with their theatres in the yards of inns, answered to the company and carts of Thespis; and the improve-



ments were gradual till in 1631, to use the words of Sir George Buck, who wrote at that time,—“Dramatic poesy is so lively expressed and represented upon the public stages of this city, London, as Rome in the highest pitch of her pomp and glory never saw it better performed.” Much of the disparagement of the old English stage, a circumstance little known, is to be attributed to the defence of poesy by that dainty and fastidious gentleman, Sir Philip Sidney, whom none of the commentators on Shakspeare have hitherto noticed for an insidious attack on *The Tempest*.

These slight notices I have deemed it expedient to introduce here, because, while I am very willing to admit that the English theatre is under great obligations to Sir William Davenant, I yet think that he was, by his French importations, the original corrupter of the old English stage, and that all we owe to the tasteful corrections of the late John Philip Kemble, have been only endeavours to restore the primitive style.

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## CHARLES HART.

The authentic records of the British Stage do not reach in any considerable quantity much farther back than the era of the Restoration. That there were good actors long before that time cannot be doubted; it cannot, indeed, be supposed that the dramas of Shakspeare and his contemporaries were acted by ordinary men, and it is certain that the histrionic art was then practised more as a trade than it perhaps has been since. The subject of the present memoir, CHARLES HART, served a regular apprenticeship to the business.

He was the grand-nephew of Shakspeare; his father, also a player, being the eldest son of the poet's sister. At the usual age he was placed as an apprentice with Robinson, then a celebrated actor, and commenced his career by playing female characters. In Shirley's tragedy of *The Carnival*, he is said to have made his first appearance as the Duchess, or it was, at least, in that part that he first distinguished himself.

On the abolition of the theatres in 1647 by the Puritans, many of the players went into the army, and Hart became a Lieutenant of horse in Prince Rupert's own regiment. But when the fate of Charles I. was settled, he was among the actors who returned to the clandestine practice of their former vocation in the Metropolis, and was among the party taken into custody while performing the tragedy of *Rollo*. Upon that occasion he sustained the part of Otto.

Hart was enrolled in the King's company established by Killigrew after the Restoration, and when Drury-Lane Theatre was opened on the 8th April 1663, he made his first appearance as Demetrius, in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *The Humorous Lieutenant*. The play-bill of the evening has been preserved, and cannot but be curious to the stage antiquary. It was as follows:—

*By His Majesty's Company of Comedians,*

At the New Theatre in Drury-Lane,

This day being Thursday, April 8, 1663, will be acted a  
Comedy called

### THE HUMOUROUS LIEUTENANT.

<i>King,</i>	Mr. Wintersel.
<i>Demetrius,</i>	Mr. Hart.
<i>Seleucus,</i>	Mr. Bart.
<i>Leontius,</i>	Major Mahon.
<i>Lieutenant,</i>	Mr. Clun.
<i>Celia,</i>	Mrs. Marshall.

This play ran twelve successive nights, but how much of its success was owing to the talent of Hart we have not the means of ascertaining. for the house was new, and afforded an attraction separate from that of the exhibition. It is, however, certain that our hero possessed eminent professional merit, and was, at least, the second performer in the company. It was said of him, that what he delivered satisfied every one; the eyes of the spectators were prepossessed and charmed by his action even before the words of the poet reached their ears; and that the best tragedies on the English stage received splendour from his performance.

But independently of his own excellence on the stage, something like fame is reflected upon him by having, about the year 1667, introduced the famous Nell Gwyn to public notice. At that period his circumstances were flourishing, and playgoing must then have been generally in fashion, for besides his regular salary of three pounds per week, he is said to have cleared about a thousand pounds per annum by his share in the theatre. Ill health compelled him to retire about the year 1679, and he soon after died.

Notwithstanding his near relationship to Shakspeare, his own merit as a performer, and the general propriety with which he managed the theatre, these barren notices contain every thing of any importance that has been preserved of this eminent delight of his own time. His name is frequently mentioned, and always with some token of respect for his professional talent, or the general respectability of his behaviour as a man, and yet it is but as a link in the history of the theatre that his name has been transmitted to posterity.

### THOMAS BETTERTON.

It is a remarkable fact in the history of the fine arts that the greatest masters in the several departments have appeared in the spring, as it were, of their respective professions; and perhaps if we

possessed authentic accounts of the English players of Shakspeare's time, we should find the rule confirmed in their case. It so happens, however, that we have hardly any materials for the biography of Betterton's predecessors. He was himself born in Tothil-street, Westminster, in August 1635. At that time his father was under-cook to King Charles I.

Having early evinced a predilection for literature, it was the intention of his family that he should be educated for one of the liberal professions; but the confusion of the times frustrated this intention. In consequence, however, of his fondness for reading, his father so far consulted the inclinations of the boy as to apprentice him to a respectable bookseller, one Rhodes, at the Bible in Charing-cross, who had been wardrobe-keeper to the theatre in Blackfriars before the suppression of dramatic amusements.

In 1659, about the time when General Monck marched with his army from Scotland towards London, Rhodes got a license to form a company of players, and he fitted up the cock-pit in Drury-Lane for their performance. The actors were chiefly new to the stage, and two of his apprentices—Betterton in men's parts, and Kynaston in women's—were at their head. What would be thought of the dignified bibliopoles of the present day—aldermen of London and bailies of Edinburgh—were they so to gratify the propensities of their apprentices! The eve of the Restoration showed, indeed, that the winter was over and gone, under which the players, like the singing birds, had so long pined.

The particular part in which Betterton made his first appearance is not recorded; but it is mentioned that he got great applause in *The Loyal Subject*, *The Willgoose Chase*, and *The Spanish Curate*, and was distinguished by the vigour and elegance of his manly personations; his voice being then, according to Roscius Anglicanus, audible, strong, full, and articulate.

The fame of Beaumont and Fletcher was then at its zenith, and in their plays, as well as in the *Pericles* ascribed to Shakspeare, and *The Bondman* of Massinger, he established the groundwork of his great reputation.

The actors employed by Rhodes were, in the spring of 1662, placed under the guidance of Sir William Davenant, and styled the Duke of York's Company; and the remains of the old companies were received by Killigrew, sworn by the Lord-Chamberlain as servants of the crown, and styled the King's Company. About ten of the King's Company were in the royal household establishment, having each ten yards of scarlet cloth, with a proper quantity of lace for liveries, and in their warrants from the Lord-Chamberlain were styled gentlemen of the great chamber. It is doubtful if the like appointments were extended to the Duke's Company. They were both, however, in high estimation with the public, and so much the delight and concern of the court, that even their private government was regarded as a special charge, and their particular differences, pretensions, and complaints, were generally determined by the personal decision of the king or the duke.

Sir William Davenant opened a new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields,

and produced there his own drama, *The Siege of Rhodes*, a play in two parts, embellished with such scenery and decorations as had never been before exhibited, it was supposed, on the boards of an English theatre. In this play Betterton appeared with great distinction, insomuch that he was soon after encouraged to attempt the part of *Hamlet*, having derived considerable advantage for the part from the hints of Sir William Davenant, to whom the acting of its original representative, taught by the great author, had been familiar. Downs expressly declares that this character enhanced Betterton's reputation to the utmost, and there is much collateral evidence to substantiate its brilliant superiority.

"You have seen," says Cibber, "a *Hamlet*, perhaps, who on the first appearance of his father's spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express rage and fury, and the house has thundered with applause, though the misguided actor was all the while, as Shakspeare terms it, 'tearing a passion into rags.' I am the more bold to offer you this particular instance, because the late Mr. Addison, while I sat by him to see this scene acted, made the same observation, asking me, with some surprise, if I thought *Hamlet* 'should be in so violent a passion with the ghost, which though it might have astonished, had not provoked him; for you may observe that in his beautiful speech the passion never rises beyond an almost breathless astonishment, or an impatience limited by filial reverence to inquire into the suspected wrongs that may have raised him from his peaceful tomb, and a desire to know what a spirit so seemingly distressed might wish or enjoin a sorrowful son to execute towards his future quiet in the grave.' This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene, which he opened with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself; and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency, and manly but not braving, his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But, alas! to preserve this medium between mouthing and meaning too little, to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice, is, of all the master-strokes of an actor, the most difficult to reach. In this none yet have equalled Betterton. He that feels not himself the passion he would raise will talk to a sleeping audience, but this never was the fault of Betterton."

As in this character he was, in the opinion of many, without an equal, and continued to be applauded in it even when declined into extreme old age, it is pleasing to contrast the vigour in which his conception of the part remained by him to the last, with Cibber's description, which may be considered as the estimate of his style of performing it in the prime of life. In No. 71, of *The Tatler*, there is the following account of him, when he was no less than seventy-four years of age.

"Had you seen him to-night," says the correspondent, "you had seen the force of action in perfection. Your admired Mr. Betterton

behaved himself so well, that though now about seventy-four, he acted youth, and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture, and voice, appeared through the whole drama a young man of great expectation, vivacity, and enterprise. The soliloquy where he began the celebrated sentence of 'To be, or not to be'—the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet—the noble ardour, after seeing his father's ghost, and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia, are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives."

In addition to this testimony to his merits in *Hamlet*, that of the author of *The Lick at the Laureat* may be quoted.

"I have lately been told by a gentleman, who has frequently seen Betterton perform *Hamlet*, that he observed his countenance, which was naturally ruddy and sanguine, in the scene of the Third Act, where his father's ghost appears, through the violent and sudden emotion of amazement and horror, turn instantly on the sight of his father's spirit as pale as his neckcloth, when his whole body seemed to be affected with a tremor inexpressible, so that had his father's ghost actually risen before him he could not have been seized with more real agonies; and this was felt so strongly by the audience, that the blood seemed to shudder in their veins likewise, and they in some measure partook of the astonishment and horror with which they saw this excellent actor affected."

We have no stronger testimony of the merits of any actor than these attestations convey, nor have we witnessed, in our time, any performance of *Hamlet* that in effect upon the audience could compare with what the latter author has described.

In the course of 1663, Betterton married Mrs. Saunderson, an actress in the same company with himself, of great talent and spotless reputation. This lady, it may be remarked, was still single, though denominated mistress. Miss, in fact, was, in Betterton's time, a term of reproach. Dryden, in the epilogue to *The Pilgrim*, 1670, says,—

Misses there were but modestly concealed.

Miss Cross, who is particularly noticed in Hayne's epilogue to Farquhar's *Love and a Bottle*, was the first actress announced as Miss, and received that distinction about the year 1702; Dr. Johnson says, the term was appropriated to gentlemen's daughters under ten until far down in the last century.

Mrs. Betterton's *Lady Macbeth* was considered one of the most admirable performances on the stage. Even Mrs. Barry, who, for excellence, acquired the epithet of The Famous, could not in that part, with all her superior strength and melody of voice, throw out those quick and careless strokes of terror and nature from the disorder of a guilty mind, which the other effected with a facility that rendered them at once tremendous and delightful. Time, says Colley Cibber, could not impair her skill, though he brought her person to decay. She was to the last the admiration of all true judges of nature, and lovers of Shakespeare, in whose plays she

chiefly excelled. After she quitted the stage, several good actresses were improved by her instructions.

She was a woman of an unblemished and sober life, and had the honour to teach Queen Anne, when Princess, the part of *Senatrua* in *Mithridates*, which she acted at court in King Charles the Second's time. After the death of Mr. Betterton, the queen ordered her a pension for life, but she lived not to receive more than the first-half year of it. The principal characters sustained by her were, *Ianthe* in the *Siege of Rhodes*, *Ophelia*, *Juliet*, *Queen Catherine*, *Duchess of Malm*, the *Amorous Widow*, and many others not less remarkable for their importance than their variety. She possessed great sensibility, and was so strongly affected at the death of her husband as to lose her senses, which, however, were recovered a short time previous to her own decease.

It has been alleged that Mrs. Betterton was the first English woman that appeared in any regular drama on a public stage, but, notwithstanding the plausibility with which this opinion has been maintained, it seems still doubtful. The first actress performed *Desdemona* when *Othello* was acted, on Saturday, the 8th of December, 1660, at the Red Bull Theatre, in Vere-street, Clare-market : and there seems to be only conjecture for supposing that it was performed by Mrs. Betterton, for we have met with no evidence that her first appearance was earlier than April, 1662, when she acted *Ianthe* in the *Siege of Rhodes*. She is supposed to have died about 1712.

At the death of Sir William Davenant, on the 17th of April, 1688, Betterton succeeded to a portion of the management of the Duke's Company. So great indeed was the estimation in which both he and his lady were held, that when a pastoral called *Calisto, or the Chaste Nymph*, was to be performed at court by persons of quality, they were appointed to instruct them in their respective parts.

In 1682, an union had been effected with the rival company, in which Mr. Betterton continued to direct, till, in 1690, a new patent was issued, which dispossessed him of importance and authority. He then confederated with the principal performers, and obtained an independent licence from King William, under which they built a new theatre in Portugal-street, Lincoln's-inn, by subscription, and opened it on the 30th of April, 1695, with Congreve's comedy of *Love for Love*.

In 1697, the prejudice of the Puritans against the stage began to revive. A person of the name of Collier published an invective on the subject, which had such an effect upon the public mind, that Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle were fined for uttering profane and indecent expressions, and the spirit of the times began to rise once more against the theatre. The feeling infected certain inhabitants of Lincoln's-inn-fields, who fancying themselves incommoded by the carriages which the playhouse drew together, moved the Court of King's Bench for its suppression. After struggling for some time against the evils of discord within the theatre, and public prejudice without, Betterton, enfeebled by age and infirmity, transferred his licence to Sir John Vanburgh, who erected a handsome theatre in

the Haymarket, in which our veteran accepted an engagement as an actor only.

His salary had never exceeded four pounds a week ; but he possessed prudence, and saved several thousand pounds, which, however, he had the misfortune to lose in his old age by a commercial adventure to the East Indies, and from that time his circumstances were greatly straitened, insomuch that the performers were induced to propose for him a benefit, which took place on the 13th of April, 1709, and was announced in *The Tatler*, No. 157, for Tuesday, April 11th, in the following terms :—

“ Mr. Bickerstaff, in consideration of his ancient friendship and acquaintance with Mr. Betterton, and great esteem for his merit, summons all his disciples, whether dead or living, mad or tame, toasts, smarts, dappers, pretty fellows, musicians or scrapers, to make their appearance at the play-house in the Haymarket on Thursday next, when there will be a play acted for the benefit of the said Betterton.”

The play was *Love for Love*, and on this occasion Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle came from their retirement to aid their ancient coadjutor by the resumption of the parts which they had originally sustained. Congreve is said to have furnished a prologue, which was never submitted to print ; and Rowe wrote the following epilogue, recited by Mrs. Barry :—

As some brave Knight who once with spear and shield  
Had sought renown in many a well-fought field,  
But now no more with sacred Fame inspired,  
Was to a peaceful hermitage retired ;  
There if by chance disastrous tales he hears  
Of matron's wrongs and captive virgin's tears,  
He feels soft pity urge his generous breast,  
And moves once more to succour the distress'd ;  
Buckled in mail he sallies on the plain,  
And turns him to the feats of arms again :  
So we, to former leagues of friendship true,  
Have bid once more our peaceful homes adieu  
To aid old Thomas, and to pleasure you ;  
Like errant damsels boldly we engage,  
Arm'd as you see for the defenceless stage.  
Time was when this good man no help did lack,  
And scorn'd that any she should hold his back ;  
But now, so age and frailty have ordain'd,  
By two at once he's forced to be sustain'd ;  
You see what failing nature brings man to,  
And yet let none insult,—for aught we know,  
She may not wear so well with some of you ;  
Though old, you find his strength is not clean past,  
But true as steel, he's mettle to the last ;  
If better he perform'd in days of yore,  
Yet now he gives you all that's in his pow'r,  
What can the youngest of you all do more ?  
What he has been, though present praise be dumb,  
Shall haply be a theme in times to come,  
As now we talk of Roscius and of Rome.  
Had you withheld your favours on this night,  
Old Shakspeare's ghost had risen to do him right ;

With indignation had you seen him frown  
 Upon the worthless, witless, tasteless town;  
 Grieved and repining you had heard him say,  
 Why are the Muse's labours cast away?  
 Why did I only write what only he could play?  
 But since, like friends to wit, thus throng'd you meet,  
 Go on, and make the generous work complete;  
 Be true to merit, and still own his cause,  
 Find something for him more than bare applause:  
 In just remembrance of your pleasures past,  
 Be kind, and give him a discharge at last;  
 In peace and ease life's remnant let him wear,  
 And hang his consecrated buskin here.

The play produced a large sum for that age, but it was not a sufficient provision for the infirmities of the actor; and "Old Thomas," as he was now called, was still obliged to labour, when permitted by the intermissions of disease, for that subsistence which his services should long before have secured.

The public, however, was not forgetful of his merits, for on the 25th of April, in the year following, he was admitted to another benefit, which, with the patronage bestowed upon its predecessor, is supposed to have netted nearly one thousand pounds—an enormous sum considering the value of money in those days. It beggars even the prodigality lavished on the performers at the Opera-house. Upon this last occasion he undertook his celebrated part of *Melantius* in the *Maid's Tragedy*, from the performance of which he ought to have been deterred, for he had just suddenly been seized with gout; he was, however, induced to employ a repellent medicine, which lessened the swelling of his feet, and permitted him to walk in his slippers. He acted with peculiar spirit, and was received with universal applause; but the distemper returned with unusual violence, ascended to his head, and terminated his existence in three days from the date of this fatal performance. On the 2nd of May, 1710, his remains were deposited, with much funeral pomp, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, an event which Sir Richard Steele has related in the following pathetic manner:—

"Having received notice that the famous actor, Mr. Betterton, was to be interred this evening in the cloisters near Westminster Abbey, I was resolved to walk thither, and see the last office done to a man whom I always very much admired, and from whose action I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature, than from the arguments of the most solid philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I have ever read. As the rude and untaught multitude are no way wrought upon more effectually than by seeing public punishments and executions, so men of letters and education feel their humility most forcibly exercised when they attend the obsequies of men who had arrived at any perfection in liberal accomplishments.

"I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in *Othello*,



the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind upon the innocent answers *Desdemona* makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and perfectly convince him that it is to stab it to admit that worst of daggers—jealousy. Whoever reads, in his closet, this admirable scene, will find that he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakspeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent, and broken sentences; but a reader that has seen Betterton act it observes there could not be a word added, that longer speeches had been unnatural,—nay, impossible in *Othello's* circumstances. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where he tells the manner of winning the affection of his mistress, was urged with so moving and graceful an energy, that while I walked in the cloisters I thought of him with the same concern as if I waited for the remains of a person who had, in real life, done all that I had seen him represent. The gloom of the place, and faint lights before the ceremony appeared, contributed to the melancholy disposition I was in, and I began to be extremely afflicted that *Brutus* and *Cassius* had any difference—that *Hotspur's* gallantry was so unfortunate—and that the mirth and good-humour of *Fulstaf* could not exempt him from the grave.

“The mention I have here made of Mr. Betterton, for whom I had, as long as I have known anything, a very great esteem and gratitude for the pleasure he gave me, can do him no good; but it may, possibly, be of service to the unhappy woman he has left behind him, to have it known that this great tragedian was never in a scene half so moving as the circumstances of his affairs created at his departure.”

“He was an actor,” says Colley Cibber, “as Shakspeare was an author, both without competitors, formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other's genius. . . . How Shakspeare wrote all men who have a taste for nature may read and know; but with what higher rapture would he still be read could they conceive how Betterton played him. Then might they know the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew to write. Pity it is that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution cannot, like those of poetry, be their own record; that the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath and motion that presents them, or at best can but faintly glimmer through the memory or imperfect attestation of a few surviving spectators. Could how Betterton spoke be as easily known as what he spoke, then might you see the muse of Shakspeare in her triumph, with all her beauties in their best array, rising into real life, and charming her beholders. He had a voice of that kind which gave more spirit to terror than to the softer passions—of more strength than melody. The rage and jealousy of *Othello* became him better than the sighs and tenderness of *Castalio*. In *Castalio* he only excelled others; in *Othello* he excelled himself, which you will easily believe, when you consider that, in spite of his complexion, *Othello* has more natural beauties than the best actor can find in all the magazine of poetry to animate his power and delight his judgment. The person of this excellent actor was suitable to his voice, more

manly than sweet, not exceeding the middle stature, inclining to the corpulent, of a serious and penetrating aspect, his limbs nearer the athletic than the delicate proportion; yet however formed, there arose from the harmony of the whole a commanding mien of majesty, which the fair-faced, or, as Shakspeare calls them, 'the curled darlings of his time,' ever wanted something to be equal masters of."

Anthony Ashton, however, gives the following description of his person, which is certainly calculated to lessen the effect of Cibber's eulogium. "Mr. Betterton," says he, "although a superlative good actor, laboured under an ill figure, being clumsily made, having a great head, a short thick neck, stooped in the shoulders, and had fat short arms, which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach. His left hand frequently lodged in his breast, between his coat and waistcoat, while with his right he prepared his speech. His actions were few but just; he had little eyes and a broad face, was slightly pock-fretten, and had a corpulent body, with thick legs and large feet; he was better to meet than to follow, for his aspect was serious, venerable, and majestic: in his latter times a little paralytic. His voice was low and grumbling, yet he could time it by an artful climax, which enforced universal attention even from the fops and orange-girls."

Cibber's description applies to Betterton when in the fullness of strength and highest power in action, whereas Ashton paints him when he was become an old man. He was not at seventy equal to what he had been at fifty, but to the last he was without his equal; and for many years after his decease, his parts in Shakspeare were considered as unsupplied.

Mr. Betterton was celebrated for polite behaviour to the dramatic writers of his time, and distinguished, by singular modesty, in not presuming to understand the chief points of any character they offered him, till their own notions had been ascertained, and, if possible, adopted. He is also praised for extending pecuniary assistance to embarrassed writers, till the success of a doubtful production might enable them to remunerate their generous creditor. Indeed, Mr. Betterton's benevolence was coupled with such magnanimity that upon the death of that unhappy friend to whose counsels his little fortune had been sacrificed, he took charge of a surviving daughter, educated her at considerable expense, and not only made her an accomplished actress, but a valuable woman. The lady was afterwards Mrs. Boman.

Among other testimonies of deference to his judgment, and regard for his zeal, the tributes of Dryden and Rowe have been brilliantly recorded. In the preface to *Don Sebastian*, Dryden says,—

"About twelve hundred lines have been cut off from this tragedy since it was first delivered to the actors. They were, indeed, so judiciously lopped by Mr. Betterton, to whose care and excellent action I am equally obliged, that the connection of the story was not lost."

And Rowe, in his *Life of Shakspeare*, says,—"I must own a

particular obligation to Mr. Betterton for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life which I have here transmitted to the public,—his veneration for the memory of Shakespeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a veneration.”

Betterton was naturally of a cheerful temper, with a pious reliance upon the dispensations of Providence, and nothing can yield a higher idea of his affability than the effect his behaviour produced upon Pope, who must have been a mere boy when first admitted to his society. He sat to the poet for his picture, which was painted in oil, and is, we believe, still preserved in the Earl of Mansfield's mansion at Caen Wood.

The claims of Betterton, as an original author, are not greatly distinguished, but his alterations and adaptations to the stage of several dramas are considered highly judicious.

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## EDWARD KYNASTON.

THE lives of the players cannot be long studied without impressing the student with the general laxity of their morals and principles, and something like wonder that such should be almost characteristic of a profession that undertakes to give lessons of virtue by example. When it is, however, considered that the drama has been really, notwithstanding what is said to the contrary, a mere amusement, the effect is quite legitimate. The common sense of the world revolts at the open inculcation of vice; but although the stage is now marvellously prudent in its speech, it is still not always a very austere observer of decorum in many of its actions; nor, indeed, was it made so circumspect as it is until a comparatively recent period: a curious speculation might be constructed upon these remarks.

If we look back to the time when the theatre was entirely a place of recreation, we shall find that the taste of all the spectators was indiscriminately consulted. There were then scenes for all sorts of men, and more of nature and of intellect in the performance; but there were also both sayings and doings which few women unveiled would at any time have been pleased to witness, and all would have shrunk from taking a part in. This fact will not be disputed; but it has not been sufficiently considered, that during what is called the exhibition of the licentious plays, the audience consisted almost exclusively of men, and when women did present themselves among them they were of a bold order—and in masque. To these causes, the endeavour to stimulate amusement, and the absence of that beautiful check which the presence of women uniformly exercises over the coarser materials which the males are made of, and above all, to the female characters being

performed by impudent, though effeminate-looking young men, the ravelled morality of the stage may partly be ascribed. The actors, in consequence, were chosen from that class of persons who, in private life, are usually the most companionable and the most dissipated.—Under this theory we may account for the general dissoluteness of the personal manners of the actors, seemingly so much at variance with their public representations. Perhaps we may venture to add that as women were gradually introduced upon the stage the propriety of the scene may have been improved ; but the drama, in losing its freedom, declined in vigour and truth. Delicacy is always veiled, and cannot be enticed into public but by some sacrifice to decorum.

It was not until after the Restoration that women were permitted to appear on the English stage ; and our present subject, Edward Kynaston, the fellow-apprentice of Betterton, is famed for having worn his petticoats with remarkable elegance and propriety. The ancient custom, however, of bringing on male gentlewomen was not always without perplexities. On one occasion, probably with reference to Kynaston, and still spoken of among the players with merriment, Charles II. came a little before his time, and not finding the actors ready sent to inquire the cause of the delay. Upon which the manager, as his wisest course, told his Majesty the truth, and with all becoming respect informed him that the Queen was not shaved,—an incident which mightily amused the Defender of the Faith.

Edward Kynaston, though not famed for such eminent qualities as Betterton, was yet in his class a distinguished performer. In youth he was so beautiful that the ladies of quality often prided themselves in taking him in their coaches to Hyde Park in his theatrical habit after the play, which in those days they had time to do, for the plays then began at four o'clock ; indeed, to the last his appearance suffered no conspicuous decay ; at sixty his teeth were all sound, white, and even, like those of a miss in her teens.

It has been said that he acquired an unnatural gravity of manner from his frequent performance of female parts ; but in several characters this elicited uncommon beauties. His performance of Leon, in Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, was uniformly applauded as an achievement of very high merit, for a manliness and honest authority that all approved, and was thought well worth the best actor's imitation. In heroic characters he was imperious and vivid. His tyrants had great force, and in real majesty he was an admired master. Every sentiment in Shakspeare's Henry the Fourth came from him as if it had been his own, and the player was lost in the King he personated. This true majesty Kynaston was so entirely master of that when he whispered to Hotspur,

“Send us your prisoners, or you'll hear of it !”

he conveyed a more terrible menace than the loudest voice could have done. But the dignity of the character appeared still more brilliant in the scene between the King and the Prince of Wales, in which the paternal grief for the errors of his son made the monarch

only more revered; his reproaches, so just, yet so unmingled with anger, opening, as Cibber beautifully says, "the arms of Nature, with a secret wish that filial Duty and Penitence awakened, might fall into them with grace and honour."

What made this actor and Betterton more surprising was, that though they both observed the same rules, those of Truth, they were each as different in their manner as in their personal form and features. But Kynaston stayed too long for himself upon the stage, his memory and spirit began to fail.

The parts in which he principally distinguished himself were Calis in *The Mad Lover*; Ismena in *The Maid of the Mill*; the heroine Aglana, in Sir John Suckling's play; Anthiope in *The Unfortunate Lovers*, and Evadne in *The Maid's Tragedy*. The three last of these parts were the earliest, and, in the opinion of Downs, the best of Kynaston's performances, for being then but a manly youth he made a tolerable substitute for feminine beauty. His forte was in moving compassion and pity.

When His Majesty's servants finally settled in 1663 at the new theatre in Drury-Lane, Kynaston was admitted to perform with them, and played Peregrine in Johnson's comedy of *The Fox*. He also held Sir Dauphine in *The Silent Woman*, and soon after succeeded to Otto in *The Duke of Normandy*. But I seek not to enumerate all his eminent parts.

It has been said that from his early usage with female characters he contracted some unpleasant tones in speaking. When George Powel was once ridding himself of the consequences of a recent debauch, Kynaston inquired if he still felt sick. "How is it possible to be otherwise," replied Powel, "when I hear you speak?"

It is, however, but justice to the acknowledged merits of Kynaston to observe that the wine which has been attributed to him could be no more than a tendency; for had it been a very conspicuous habit the audience would have soon made him sensible that he must change it.

It appears that when Kynaston joined the King's actors he acquired a share in the property of Drury-Lane; for on the 14th October, 1681, he conveyed over to Sir William Davenant, Betterton, and Smith, all the right he possessed to the property amassed there, on condition of receiving five shillings for every day upon which the Duke's company shall act at Dorset-gardens, or elsewhere. He also engaged, if possible, to separate himself from the King's company, to act with the Duke's; in the event of doing so his pension was to cease, and he was to be paid a weekly allowance of 3*l.*; moreover, he joined with Charles Hart to oblige Mr. Killigrew to consent to this arrangement, if necessary, by an action at law.

After this junction he performed Maximus in Lord Rochester's alteration of *Valentinian*. In 1695 he followed the fortunes of Betterton to Lincoln's-Inn-Field, where he performed in *Cyrus the Great*.

Concerning his private life I have gleaned nothing interesting; but by the following anecdote it would seem that he was naturally vain of his personal elegance, in which he bore a great

resemblance to the celebrated Sir Charles Sedley, of which he was very proud. On one occasion he got a suit of clothes made similar to those of that fashionable baronet, and appearing publicly in it Sir Charles punished his vanity in his usual mischievous way. He hired a bravo to pick a quarrel with Kynaston in the Park as himself, and to beat him most unmercifully. Kynaston protested he was not the person he was taken for; but the ruffian only redoubled his blows. When the baronet was remonstrated with upon the transaction, he told the actor's friends that Kynaston had not suffered so much in his bones, as *he* had in his character, the whole town believing that he had undergone the disgrace of the chastisement.

He left the stage before 1706, but the exact period is not recorded in any of my authorities, for in that year Downs speaks of Betterton and Underhill as being then the only remains of the Duke's servants. Kynaston died wealthy, and was buried in the church-yard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

## JOSEPH HAYNES.

JOSEPH HAYNES was the Patch of the theatre, if we may venture, though but in metaphor, to transfer an officer or fool of regal consequence to the mimic kingdom. The place of his birth is not known, nor the exact condition of his parents, farther than that they were poor but in their character respectable. It would seem, however, that Westminster has the honour of having produced him, as Tobyas Thomas, his original biographer, states that he was educated at St. Martin's school, where his progress was so extraordinary as to attract great admiration; indeed, so remarkable were his aptitude and proficiency, that several gentlemen sent him to Oxford, in order that a lad of such lively intelligence should not be lost by the obscurity of his birth.

At college he was no less distinguished than he had been at school, and it is universally said of him, that had his discretion been equal to his wit, he might have established a flourishing fortune.

When Sir Joseph Williamson was elected Member for the University, he gave Haynes some employment, and after he became Secretary of State still continued him in his service. But the vanity and imprudence of Haynes were enemies to his advancement, for he had no correct notion of confidential business, and affected the airs of a statesman among his companions, by talking of the contents of the public dispatches which he had translated into Latin for his patron; insomuch, that when he came to a tavern all were hushed but Machiavelli.

Conduct of this kind was not however approved by Sir Joseph, who, still without losing his regard for his humour and vivacity, found it necessary to be more wary with so indiscreet a servant, and

accordingly recommended him to one of the heads of the University of Cambridge, by whom he was indulgently entertained, and where he took the degree of Master of Arts. His native character and propensity to tricks and jocularities continued, however, to keep pace with his learning; for, soon after he had attained his academical dignity, a company of strolling players came to the city, and Joe, as our hero was familiarly called by all who knew him, was easily persuaded to join them.

With these players he continued some time wandering over the country; at last he came to London, where he was induced to perform at a theatre then recently erected in Hatton-garden, and when that establishment was broken up, he obtained an engagement at Drury Lane, about the time when the Duke of Buckingham brought out the *Rehearsal*: and it so happened, that on the eve of the representation of that play, Lacy, who was to perform the part of Bays, fell sick, and Joe was suddenly substituted for him. By the Duke's suggestions, and the instructions which Lacy was able to give him, he made himself quickly master of the character, and performed it with great applause; indeed with such eminent success, that many of the nobility, and some of the most ingenious men of the time, became solicitous of his acquaintance. The Duke himself was so much pleased with him and interested in his curious peculiarities, that when he went on his embassy to Paris he carried Haynes in his suite, and often entertained him more as a companion than so humble a dependant.

Joe was mightily delighted with the French people, and he was no less agreeable to them. His quaint pleasantry made him a fascinating companion to the men, and his whimsical passions as much so to the ladies. He soon saw, however, that he was deficient in rank, and to remedy the defect created himself a Count, and stayed behind the Duke as such when his Grace returned home.

He had now fairly set up on his own means, and his trade was prosperous: but no state of life is without its cares, for although he borrowed money for some time with great ease and success, liveries came to be paid, duns multiplied, and the steward on his estates in England was one of the most irregular fellows possible, neglecting always to make him remittances in the most embarrassing manner. In a word, this rogue of a steward became so intolerable that Joe was obliged to put himself out of arm's way from his Parisian creditors, and steering for Dieppe, embarked there for England.

He was joyously received by his old companions in London, and immediately joined the players at the theatre in Dorset Gardens, and there he became a noted dancer, "having," as says his biographer, "learned, it seems, in France that faculty so natural to the French, to fling his legs about." After some short time he left this theatre and went to Drury Lane, where he continued until it was destroyed by fire.

While the theatre was rebuilding, Killigrew and Hart sent the scene-shifter to Paris, to learn something of the machinery of the French stage, and Joe agreed to accompany him to act as his interpreter; but somehow Joe had occasion, before leaving London,

to spend the money given for their expenses. This however was no great embarrassment, for he immediately nominated himself secretary to the Duke of Monmouth, who had gone on a secret expedition to Maestricht, and whom he was obliged immediately to follow. By this expedient he contrived to travel on horseback to Dover, the scene-shifter acting as his servant.

They soon reached Paris, where the Count, much to his surprise, found that the inhabitants had memories, and that he was recollected by those of whom he had done the honour of borrowing money ; but he for some time parried their hints for payment with the facetious dexterity of a Sheridan. At last they became tired with his fencing, and resolved to prevent his escape. Joe, however, being informed by a tavern keeper of their kind intentions, resolved on the instant to be off ; so borrowing from no less a personage than the rector of the Jesuits' College the sum of forty pounds, by a pretended note from the Duke of Monmouth, he returned to London with the scene-shifter, as well informed of the theatric machines and scenes of the Parisian theatre as if he had been all the time in Jerusalem.

Next summer, he went with the King's Company to Oxford, where his salary as a player being inadequate to his expenses, he turned fortune-teller ; but notwithstanding that universities are the great hotbeds of all sorts of folly in opinion, he was obliged to decamp in the night for London.

Hart, who was a person of respectable conduct, had not been too well pleased with Joe's negotiations in France, and with his having squandered so much money in Paris to no purpose, had some natural anger against him, and this was cause enough for Joe to cherish spite in return. In the play of *Catiline's Conspiracy*, acted about this time, a great number of senators of Rome were wanted, and Hart made Joe one, although his salary, being fifty shillings a week, freed him from any obligation to accept the dignity. Joe, however, after some symptoms of rebellion, complied. He got a scaremouch dress, a large full ruff, made himself whiskers from ear to ear, put on his head a merry Andrew's cap, and with a short pipe in his mouth, bearing a three-legged stool in his hand, he followed Hart on the stage, set himself down behind him, and began to smoke his pipe, and to laugh and point at him. This ludicrous figure put the whole theatre in a roar of laughter. Hart, who was a man of such self-possession and equanimity that, happen what might, he never discomposed himself, continued his part without being aware of Joe's behaviour, wondering, however, at the seemingly unaccountable mirth. At last, happening to turn his head, he beheld Joe, and in great wrath instantly made his exit, swearing he never would set his foot on the stage unless Joe were immediately dismissed. Joe was accordingly sent off, but nothing downhearted, he instantly joined a company of strollers at Greenwich, where he acted and danced for some time ; but tiring soon he lampooned them all and came to London.

Joe had not forgotten that Hart had been the cause of his dismissal, and resolved to be revenged ; accordingly, as he was one day walking in the street, he met a parson of an odd, simple



appearance, whom he accosted in a friendly manner, as if they had been formerly acquainted, although he had never seen him before, and they adjourned together to a tavern, where the parson informed Joe that he had been Chaplain to the ship *Monke*, but was then in lack of employment. Joe expressed great satisfaction at hearing the news, as it was in his power to help him to a place of sixty pounds a year, bed, board, and washing, besides gifts at Christmas and Easter, only for officiating one hour in the four-and-twenty, from nine to ten o'clock in the forenoon. The marine priest was delighted, and, returning his warmest thanks, entreated Joe to inform him of the particulars. Upon which Joe told him that his name was Haynes, that he was one of the patentees of Drury Lane theatre, and that he would make him chaplain to the playhouse.

"Against to-morrow," said Joe, "I would have you provide yourself with a bell, and there is half-a-crown to buy one; and at nine o'clock go to the playhouse and ring your bell and call them all to prayers, saying, in an audible voice, 'Players, come to prayers! players, come to prayers!' This you must do, lest they mistake you for the dustman, both bells being so much alike. But there is one thing that I particularly desire you to take care of; on the third door on the left hand, lives one Mr. Hart. That gentleman, whether he be delirious or frantic, or whether he be possessed of some notions of Atheism, if you mention prayers, will laugh at you, perhaps swear, curse, and abuse you. If it proceed from the first, the poor unhappy gentleman ought to be pitied; but if from the latter, he shall quit the house, for I will never suffer such wickedness in any playhouse where I am concerned; and do, my good Sir, let it be your earnest endeavour to find out the cause, and by your ghostly exhortations to remove the effects,—such weeds must not be permitted to grow in a vineyard where you are the gardener; abuse you must expect, but your reward will be great gain—go to his house and oblige him to come along with you to prayers."

Being thus advised, the parson, after a parting cup, withdrew and bought the bell.

Next morning, according to orders, his reverence went to the theatre, ringing his bell, and calling aloud, "Players, come to prayers! players, come to prayers!" Finding Hart's door open, he went in bawling, "Players, come to prayers!" Hart came down in a violent passion, and demanded to know why he was so disturbed?

The parson replied, "Players, come to prayers!"

Hart, seeing no help, bridled his passion, and said, "that he wondered how a gentleman of his gown and seeming sense, could make himself so ridiculous." The parson looked at him with an eye of doubt, then rang his bell again, and bawled to the pitch of his voice, "Players, come to prayers!" Hart, in desperation, now began to swear; but the other informed him, "I have been told of your cursing and swearing and atheistical blasphemies; but, nevertheless, I will do my duty," and accordingly laid hands on Hart to drag him away, bawling, "Players, come to prayers!"

At this new absurdity, Hart began to suspect that his reverence was mad, or that some trick was played upon him, and asked him to

walk into his room, when, after they had drunk a cup of sack together, the parson told the whole story of his engagement. The poor man was soon undeceived; the story, however, taking wings, reached the ears of King Charles, who was so mightily pleased with the joke, that he sent for Joe, and had him reinstated in the theatre.

But the adventure did not end here; for the parson had a son who was accounted a great swordsman, a fighting, fiery, choleric, hectoring fellow, but, as such commonly are at bottom, as rank a coward as ever traduced his neighbour behind his back, and he swaggeringly vowed to revenge his father's wrongs.

He met Joe coming from the rehearsal one day, and desired him to draw; Joe demanded to know why, and they adjourned to a tavern that he might be informed. After learning the business, Joe agreed to give the satisfaction sought, but requested a short time to say his prayers, and retired to another room, where he prayed aloud that he might be forgiven for killing seventeen different persons in duels, and concluded by asking forgiveness for being obliged to add this unhappy gentleman to the catalogue! The other hearing him, and thinking his thread of life near its end, ran down stairs, and left Joe to pay the reckoning.

In the summer vacation Joe determined to turn mountebank, and set out with a retinue of tumblers, dancers, etc. for Hertford. He himself passed by the venerable name of Signore Salmatius, whose fame sounded not only in Italy, but in most parts of Europe, as he himself declared. On his arrival at Hertford he commenced business, and great was his practice, and great his applause; the invalids and curious of all ages flocking to him. But mortal greatness cannot continue long without change, and so Joe found; for whilst in the meridian of his glory, a doctor, no less famous than himself, vulgarly called the Unborn Doctor, came rattling into Hertford in a coach and six, with fine liveries and a long train of attendants, which caused Joe's practice to decline. But he was not to be beaten in this manner, so he ordered his stage to be removed to the same street and within three yards of his opponent's, determined to have his share in the spectators if he could not obtain it in his practice; and as the Unborn Doctor came on his stage, Joe mounted on his, and abused him in the most vituperative terms. The doctor retaliated, and had the best of the argument; Joe challenged him to come next market day, and upon the public stage to discuss a point of physic with him. The challenge was accepted, and they were attended with grand huzzas by the mob to their separate lodgings.

The day being come, a great flock assembled to hear this learned controversy; and the adversaries being on the stage, Joe proposed that each should mount a stool to be more conspicuous to the spectators; and this being agreed to, he commenced as follows:—

“Gentlemen, I thank you all for your good company, and hope that I shall thoroughly convince you, before you go, how grossly you have all been abused by this impostor, and that you will be so far from repenting of your coming hither, that I shall deserve your eternal thanks and prayers, for discovering those dangerous shelves

and rocks the dear bark of your healths was in danger of splitting against. Gentlemen, I neither come hither to get a name nor an estate ; the first, by my assiduous study and care and many miraculous cures performed in Spain, Italy, Genoa, Flanders, Holland, France, and England ; nay, as I may boldly say, *per totum terrarum orbem*, has established that (thanks to my propitious stars !) many years ago. As to the latter, gentlemen, those kings and foreign princes who, by my skill, have been preserved and snatched from the dreadful hungry and gaping jaws of death, and whose images I have the honour to wear, (showing several medals) have sufficiently rewarded my care, and put me beyond any such occasion to follow my profession for the lucre of gain at this time of day. But hearing how much the English nation was oppressed with the scurvy, gout, etc., I thought myself bound in duty, knowing my cures infallible, to come hither and relieve the distempered. Besides, gentlemen, I am the seventh son of a seventh son, so was my father before me, and my grandfather before him, all have remained seventh sons of seventh sons for near 200 years. To convince you that what I say is truth, I foresee that some heavy judgment will fall on the head of that impostor, which I pray Heaven may be shown here as an exemplary punishment. Lord grant that the impostor may fall, and the true doctor remain unhurt !”

At these words, and just as his opponent was beginning to stutter his answer, Joe's Merry-andrew, who was underneath the stage of his rival with a cord fastened to his stool, pulled it from under him, and down he tumbled. This decided the controversy. Joe was carried to his lodgings in triumph, and the other St. John Long was hooted out of the town with shame and disgrace.

Joe's fame was now waxen wide ; but at length having been guilty of some misdemeanours, he was committed to prison. He was, however, after a time discharged ; came to his London engagement, and entertained the audience with a prologue descriptive of his summer's grasshopping.

He sometime afterwards took a trip to Windsor, and entered himself with a company of strollers, who were in a deplorable condition, having acted all their small stock of plays, and those so often, that nobody would come to see them. At last Joe, on condition that he should have half the proceeds, undertook to fill the house.

The play of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was given out for acting by Joe, although not one in the company knew a word of it, and they had a full house ; however, Joe was puzzled what excuse to offer for not playing as advertised, when he saw a lady of great note in the town coming to the theatre. He ran to her coach, told her that they had given out a play which could not be acted, as some of their company were indisposed, and entreated that her ladyship would be pleased to ask for any other, as the audience would be satisfied with whatever she commanded. This she promised to do ; and Joe getting upon the stage, she called to him and asked what play was to be acted ? He told her *The Merry Wives of Windsor* ; to this she replied, that being fatigued with it in London she could not endure the thought of it, and besought him to oblige her by

putting it off. Joe said, if the audience would please to accept of it, he would certainly oblige her ladyship in any thing, and accordingly the play was put off, and he got his money.

In the spring Joe went to Portsmouth with a company of strollers ; but as they did not succeed, they all left the town except Joe, who was imprisoned for debt. He, however, made his escape, and went to the governor of the Isle of Wight, who entertained him at his own table, and mustered him as a soldier, but freed him from all duty and attendance, allowing him at the same time treble pay out of his own pocket. Joe soon after visited Portsmouth, and boasting how he had been entertained, the tale came to the governor's ears, who ordered a file of musqueteers to fetch him back, and threw him into durance, threatening to hang him for deserting. At this juncture, a new ambassador to Constantinople was forced to put in to the Isle of Wight by contrary winds, and Joe was sent to him, unwilling, however, to leave England ; but in the end he consented, and sailed for the Ottoman metropolis.

The ambassador died on the passage. His lady and family returned, and on her way made some stay at Leghorn, where she presented Joe with the better part of her husband's wardrobe, and a handsome present in money. The money of course did not last long, and he was reduced to great want, when he met with an Englishman belonging to the Factory, who having known him at the play-house, invited him to his house, where Joe gave him a narrative of his misfortunes. Through this man he was introduced to dance before the Grand Duke of Florence, and had the honour to teach the young Prince and Princess. He afterwards rose to great importance, insomuch that whoever desired to obtain any favour of the Duke, could intercede with no fitter man to accomplish his desire. This begat him enemies, and he had more than one quarrel on the subject.

Joe, in teaching the Princess, however, was a little too familiar, but luckily for his head he made his escape to Rome ; there he applied to the English agent, by whom he was well entertained, and became the delight of all companies. His holiness the Pope was immensely pleased with him, and had his picture drawn by one of the most celebrated Roman painters, holding the Pope's picture in his hand and smiling on it : at last weary of this greatness, he took his leave, and returned to England, where on reaching London, he waited on King James, had the honour to kiss his hand, and remained in favour during his reign ; but, after his abdication, Joe turned precisian, wearing a plain band, and following the law under the name of an attorney. In this masquerade he continued some time ; afterwards he preached among the Quakers, and returning to the stage, finished his career as an actor.

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## ROBERT WILKS.

THE life of Robert Wilks exhibits much of the ideal beauty of a player's character. It is romantic, abounding in instances of

generosity, spirited, and eminently distinguished for shrewdness, in the midst of an apparently careless prodigality.

Daniel O'Bryan, who describes himself as his schoolfellow, says, that he was born in 1666, in Meath-street, in the liberty of the Earl of Meath, in Dublin; and that his father was a stuff-weaver by trade. But Bellchambers, in his edition of the *Life of Colley Cibber*, places him in a more eminent rank. "The ancestors," says he, "of this great comedian, were seated at Bromesgrove, in Worcestershire, where Judge Wilks, his grandfather, raised a troop of horse at his own expense for the service of Charles I., in whose cause the family suffered so much, that the father of Robert, with his wife, and the scanty remains of an ample fortune, removed to Dublin; near to which, at a place called Rathfarnham, the comedian was born in the year 1670."

His father had several other children, but Robert was so remarkable above them all for the liveliness of his genius, that it was early determined to send him to the university, and to educate him for the church. Pursuant to this resolution, he was accordingly placed in the grammar-school, where he made some progress, and had a writing-master to attend him thrice a week. On a sudden, however, he took an antipathy to classical studies, but adhered so closely to his penmanship, that in less than two years he was said to be qualified for any employment that required elegant writing.

The distaste at his studies greatly grieved his father; who, finding remonstrance unavailing, submitted to the misfortune, and by dint of good interest, procured for him the situation of a clerk in the office of the Irish Secretary at War. Here Robert for some time conducted himself with great assiduity, but the sprightliness of his character could not be repressed. By frequenting the theatre, and associating himself with the actors, his official duties became "stale, flat, and unprofitable," in his eyes; and he resolved to be a player. Instead of following his official business, he spent most of his time, when at his desk, in reading plays and amorous comedies, and his leisure in making love to a neighbour's daughter, whom he soon persuaded to a clandestine marriage.

She lived with her father until the fruits of their intercourse could no longer be concealed, when the old man taxing her with her appearance, she confessed her marriage with Robert Wilks. He was so enraged at her imprudence, that, after rebuking her in the severest manner, he turned her immediately out of doors, and kept from her all her apparel, notwithstanding that her mother interceded for her with the most earnest affection.

From her father's she went directly to the office of the Secretary at War in the Castle, and with swollen eyes and a heart bursting with grief, described the scene which had taken place to her husband. The news naturally affected him deeply; but making a virtue of necessity, he comforted her as well as he could, and conveyed her from the office to his father's house in Meath-street, where they were kindly received by his mother, who was at first inexpressibly surprised at hearing of the marriage, and strongly expressed her apprehensions that his father would not easily be reconciled to

it, but promised to use her utmost efforts to effect a reconciliation. It came to pass as she expected ; when Mr. Wilks was informed of what had taken place, he was extremely incensed at the thoughtlessness of his son, nor could all the entreaties of his wife pacify him, or even prevail with him to suffer the young couple to stay one night in his house.

O'Bryan has neglected to mention the age of Robert when this disclosure happened ; but it would seem, from the degree of public interest which the affair excited, that he must have been then very young. Whether the rash lovers deserved the severity with which they were treated by both their fathers, may admit of some controversy. Robert, it is true, had been heedless in his duty ; in short, one of those spruce youths who wear their hats a little on the one side, and affect more of a rakish air than the degree of their delinquency exactly justifies. But his imprudent wedding seems to have been his only serious offence, and there is no imputation whatever on the young woman. The character of the two mothers affords a pleasing contrast of maternal affection, opposed to the relentless severity of the fathers. Old Mrs. Wilks, before the dejected couple left the house, took an opportunity of putting three pistoles into the hands of her son, unknown to his father, exhorted him to use his wife with tenderness and care, and promised to do all that lay in her power to appease her husband and to assist them.

Misfortunes never come singly, and so it fared with these loving and afflicted young creatures. So soon as Wilks returned to his office, the Secretary sent for him, and said that he had been informed he so often neglected his duty it could no longer be endured, and therefore he was dismissed and another placed in his room. The coincidence of this calamity with the rejection and disappointments he had already suffered that day, if altogether accidental, is singular, and appears to have almost overwhelmed Wilks. 'Misery lent him eloquence ; and he represented to the Secretary his wretched circumstances and indigent condition with such effect, that although he was not restored to his place, a quarter's salary was immediately paid to him.

The situation of Wilks and his wife, after this interview with the Secretary at War, cannot be contemplated without sorrow, nor was their conduct undeserving of respect and pity. In returning to the house where he had placed his wife, he resolved to conceal from her the loss he had sustained, under an apprehension that, in her condition, and after the agitation she had already endured, the disconsolate tidings might prove fatal. But when she heard the news, she submitted to her lot with firmness and magnanimity, deploring the misfortune more on his account than her own, and endeavouring to cheer him with the hope that, in time, their distress and the mediation of friends might prevail with their parents to receive them again into favour. But it was a fallacious fancy. Their fathers were inexorable, and the dismissal of our hero from his office only served to exasperate old Mr. Wilks still more against him, in so much that he declared to his wife, if ever she went near the miserable pair, or gave them any assistance, without his consent, a separation would certainly ensue between themselves.

This unnatural severity became the common discourse of Dublin, and reaching the ears of a Mr. Cope, a respectable goldsmith, he informed his wife that, with her approbation, he would take the young unfortunates into his house. Mrs. Cope, a woman of great gentleness and compassion, joyfully encouraged her husband's charitable intent; and telling him that no time ought to be lost in such a case, they went immediately in quest of the sufferers, and having found where they lodged, brought them forthwith in a coach to their own house. Here they entertained them for two years, during which Mrs. Wilks had two children, and as much care was taken of the family as if Mr. Wilks had been the son of his hospitable friend. Perhaps fiction affords few incidents more romantic than these; and the natural generosity of the human heart is vindicated by the contrast of characters in this little drama of real life.

In the mean time our hero had no resource but the stage, his propensity to which, and the tinge which dramatic reading had given to his imagination, had been the original cause of his embarrassments. Being well acquainted with the actors, he offered himself to the theatre. In January 1689 he made his first appearance as Othello, and was received with universal applause. He was not, however, altogether a novice in the art; he had previously acted, in private, the Colonel, in Dryden's *Spanish Friar*, and acquitted himself with considerable éclat. It is therefore probable that, in the worst of his distress, his buoyant animal spirits derived support from day-dreams of theatrical success, and that he suffered less in the midst of his humiliation and misery, than such a state of circumstances was likely to have produced on a mind less adventurous.

His appearance in Othello was followed by an engagement; but his salary was small, not exceeding twenty shillings per week. Next year the range of his characters was extended, and his weekly salary was augmented to thirty shillings. But the troubles in Ireland occasioning many Protestant families to quit that kingdom and seek refuge in England, the players were obliged to give over acting, and Wilks was advised, by an actor of the name of Richards, to try the London boards, where Betterton, with whom Richards was acquainted, had then great influence.

He accordingly communicated his intention to Mr. Cope and his wife, who were very unwilling to part with him; but perceiving his inclination daily increasing, they refrained from opposing his intention, and united their endeavours to enable him to accomplish his journey with his family in comfort. They applied on his behalf to his father with so much effect, that they prevailed on him to give twenty guineas. Mr. Cope himself not only gave him a release for all the expenses incurred by keeping his family, but made Mrs. Wilks a present of five guineas at her departure. But her father would listen neither to affection nor to charity: he not only refused to give her one shilling, but with rage, amounting almost to insanity, cursed her with the bitterest imprecations, and wished that her life might be one continued scene of misery.

It is difficult to account for such inordinate and unnatural fury, for there had been nothing very criminal in her conduct. It would,

therefore, seem that the harsh-hearted choleric old man was instigated against her more by that strange revulsion of nature, which makes some minds regard with hatred, and as adversaries, those whom they have too hardly treated or injured. Mrs. Wilks, a gentle and piously-disposed young creature, endured his resentment and contumely with uncomplaining meekness, and was constant in her devotion in praying for the welfare of her parents, and for their conversion to better feelings ; for her mother, in the end, had proved as rigid as her father, and even, it is said, goaded him against her.

Furnished with letters from the veteran Richards to Betterton, Wilks and his family embarked for England. They had a quick and prosperous voyage to Parkgate, and as soon as they had refreshed themselves, they hired horses and came to West Chester, where they continued four or five days, and were handsomely entertained by the Irish nobility, then settled as refugees in that city. From thence they came in the stage-coach to London ; and on his arrival, Wilks presented himself to Betterton, and was received into the Drury-lane company at a salary of only fifteen shillings per week. His business, as Cibber relates, was insignificant ; the characters he had sustained in Dublin were all in the possession of performers of greater name.

Lycippus, in the *The Maid's Tragedy*, was the part in which he first appeared, and the best he was permitted to assume. His merit in it appears, however, to have been, considering the part, distinguished. Betterton, who performed *Melantius*, having occasion to address him in extenuation of the King's death, did so with such dignity, that Wilks could hardly muster courage enough to make the proper replies ; but there was something so interesting in his diffidence, that the veteran said to him,—"Young man, this fear does not ill become you ; a horse that sets out at the strength of his speed will soon be jaded." And Dryden, as well as Sir George Etheridge, Wycherley, Congreve, and all the wits of the age, were soon of opinion, that he would, in the course of a few years, become the best comedian that had ever graced the English stage.

O'Bryan says, that he continued almost three years in London, and played low parts in comedy, till meeting with Ashbury, who had come from Dublin to make up a company for the theatre in that city, he engaged himself to him, and so returned to Ireland. Bellechambers, on the other hand, says, that he remained in London but one winter ; during which, his first wife having died, he married a lady of respectable connexions, and with her, on a refusal from the manager to raise his salary, he departed for Dublin. But in this matter I am inclined to believe O'Bryan's account the most correct : it was during his second visit to London that his second marriage was celebrated.

It would seem that Ashbury had formed a correct estimate of the talents and capacity of Wilks, and took particular pains to instruct him in every part he played, till he prevailed upon him to attempt the character of *Alexander the Great*, to which Wilks consented with great reluctance, declaring that his taste and power rendered him unfit for tragic parts. His performance obtained much applause, but his exertions in the dying-scene were so vehement, that they threw him into a fever, which put a stop to the run of the tragedy, as it



had very nearly done to his life. During this interval the friendship of Ashbury was unceasing; he procured for him the best medical attendance, and defrayed the expenses from his own purse.

It was soon after this that Wilks formed an acquaintance with the ingenious George Farquhar, whose diverting comedies and melancholy life have never ceased to amuse and interest the dramatic reader. By the mediation of Wilks he was admitted into the Dublin Theatre, where failing of success, his friend, who was sensible of his talents, advised him to relinquish that mode of life, and to write for the stage. "It is not here, in Ireland," said he, "that you can expect encouragement adequate to your merits. I would, therefore, advise you to go to London." But Farquhar was in no condition to undertake such a journey, and he ingeniously laid open his unhappy circumstances to Wilks, who recollecting the misfortunes he had himself suffered, with a generosity far beyond his own means, made him a present of ten guineas, and promised to use his interest with Ashbury, the manager, to let him have a benefit play. Ashbury, a man of kind and munificent dispositions, readily complied with Wilks's request, and not only granted the benefit, but complimented Farquhar with the charges of the house. This enabled the unfortunate poet to carry the advice of his friend into effect. The next day he embarked for London.

Such instances of generosity ought to redeem many faults. Wilks's gaiety of humour was without that carelessness of others' feelings which is too often associated with light-heartedness; nor does his life afford any support to the opinion of the satirist, that those who have themselves drunk deeply of distress, are apt to look with disgust, rather than with pity, on the sufferings of others.

Wilks continued in Ireland about two years after the departure of his friend Farquhar, and the occasion which then induced him to leave Dublin was one of the most interesting incidents of his life. If the story which broke off his intercourse with Ashbury, to whose kindness he had been so much indebted, was founded in truth, it is impossible to withhold from his conduct the reproach of the basest ingratitude as well as of profligacy; but if we adopt the account of his friends, it will be equally impossible to refuse him the praise of manliness and candour.

Mrs. Ashbury was much younger than her husband, and in her person elegant and beautiful. She played the principal parts in genteel comedy with Wilks, and a report was soon spread abroad that their private rehearsals were distinguished for more than professional ardour. Such was the esteem in which Ashbury held Wilks, and such his confidence in the character of his wife, that he long disregarded the rumour. It was, however, repeated so often to him, that he at last began to suspect there might be some foundation for it, and he became in consequence uneasy, sometimes peevish, and reflected with chagrin that he was himself older than his wife by many years, while Wilks, in the prime of life, possessed a person and manners highly calculated to engage a woman's fancy.

Wilks was vexed that Ashbury should entertain any derogatory opinion of him, and one day inquired, with decision and frankness,

if he had ever given him, by word or action, any cause to think he could be guilty of such base ingratitude to him, who had laid him under so many obligations of honour and friendship! To this appeal the jealous husband answered sternly—"I *hope* you have not been so perfidious."—"Sir," continued the other, "as you have known the world many years longer than I have done, I was in great hope that you would have been so far your own friend as not to give credit to idle and groundless reports. Rumour is a common liar, and if the tittle-tattle of the multitude shall be admitted as a sufficient proof, whose reputation is safe? I declare myself innocent, and am willing to give you the most convincing satisfaction that I am incapable of such unworthiness, while I shall esteem myself happy if I can restore your former tranquillity and peace of mind." "That is not in your power," said Ashbury. "I wish it could be done; but the arrow is lodged too deep ever to be drawn out."—"Then, Sir," replied Wilks, "since you are obstinately bent not to suffer any means to be used which may remove your uneasiness, I can only promise you, that in a very little time I shall put it out of the power of malice to say that you shall disquiet yourself for the future on my account."

Mrs. Ashbury was a woman of many excellent qualities, uncommon piety, charity, and good-nature, virtues not then common among the ladies of the theatre. She was punctual in her devotions, and did not fail to receive the sacrament once in every month. One day, soon after the above conversation, and in the hope of removing the groundless jealousy of her husband, she delivered a paper into the hands of the minister at the communion-table, asserting her innocence, and declared the contents to be true. The clergyman showed the paper to Ashbury, who read it with visible emotion; but still it had not the desired effect; and his wife, perceiving his jealousy unsatisfied, requested permission to retire from the theatre. With this he refused to comply, for he well knew that the stage could not be supported without her.

Soon after, Wilks came to him one morning, gave up all his parts, and informed him that in the course of a week he intended to set out for England. Ashbury was overwhelmed with the news, and used all his rhetoric to dissuade him from such a design; and when he found that he could not prevail, he called his wife, and desired her to use her interest and influence to induce him to continue with them.

If any thing could have altered the determination of Wilks, these earnest solicitations would have done it; but he soon convinced the Ashburys that their entreaties were unavailing, by producing letters from the theatre in London, showing that he had already made proposals to rejoin the company there, and that they had been accepted. However, at the intercession of Mrs. Ashbury, he stayed in Dublin until some of the other actors had got up his parts, and a benefit was over, which Ashbury, notwithstanding what had taken place between them, obliged him to accept.

Upon a transaction in its nature and management so romantic, we might pause to offer some reflections, but, considering the alleged

licentiousness of the players' characters in those days, we refrain. In truth, the manner in which O'Bryan talks of Wilks on this occasion, forces us to recollect the excuse of the French actress when the purity of her virtue was called in question. "I will not deny," says O'Bryan, "that as he was a man of gallantry, so he had some amours, though very few."—"Well," said Mademoiselle, when reproached, "I acknowledge that I had a child, but it was a very little one!"

His return to Drury-lane was in the year 1696, where he was received with open arms by Betterton, then the manager. The first part he acted was Roebuck, in *Love and a Bottle*, written by his friend Farquhar. The second was Palamede, in *Marriage à la Mode*, in which his merits were so eminent that he was established at once in the esteem of all the town. The third appearance was as Sir Harry Wildair, in *The Trip to the Jubilee*, a character which Farquhar drew on purpose for him, and which he performed with such easy, gentlemanly negligence, that he gained universal applause, and had a run in it of two-and-fifty nights, amply satisfying every expectation of the author.

Wilks, in coming to England, expected to succeed Mountford, an actor recently dead, who had shone with particular brilliancy in gay characters; but upon his arrival, he found Powell already in possession of all his chief parts. Powell, however, treated him with apparent liberality, by offering him the choice of any of the parts in which he thought fit to make his appearance. This was a sinister favour, and intended to hurt him by exposing him to a comparison with the mellowed maturity of Powell; but Wilks was so far on his guard; he accepted only a part which Powell had himself played, but in which Mountford had never acted: it was that of Palamede. Whatever fame had preceded him from Ireland, where he was greatly admired, Cibber says, "that in this part he appeared but a raw actor as compared with Powell, and missed a good deal of the loose humour of the character which the other more happily hit; but he was young, erect, of a pleasing aspect, and on the whole gave the town and the stage sufficient hopes of him."

Upon the success of Wilks, the pretended contempt which Powell had held him in soured into open jealousy. He now plainly saw that he was a formidable rival, and saw, too, that other people were of that opinion, and accordingly deemed it necessary to oppose and be troublesome to him. Wilks was as jealous of his fame as the other, and they soon came to a rupture. A challenge ensued, but it happened to come from Powell when his head was heated with wine, which was too often the case, so that next morning, when it was cooled, he allowed the affair to end in Wilks's favour. Powell, indeed, discovered, that it was not by intimidation he could acquire an ascendancy over his rival, for when Wilks was provoked he would really give battle; so that after some further altercations, he lost his temper, cocked his hat with a swagger, and in his passion walked off to the opposition company in Lincoln's-inn-fields.

Although, in voice and ear, Nature had been more kind to Powell, yet he so often lost the value of them by unheedful confidence, that

the constant care and propriety of Wilks soon left him far behind in public esteem and approbation. His memory was not less tenacious than that of Wilks; but he put too much trust in it, and idly deferred the study of his parts, as clever schoolboys do their exercises, to the latest moment. Wilks never lost an hour, and was, in all his parts, perfect to such exactitude, that, in forty years, he rarely changed or misplaced an article in any one of them. Such uncommon diligence was adding to the gifts of nature all that is in the actor's power. "I have been astonished," says Cibber, to see him swallow a volume of froth and insipidity in a new play, that we were sure could not live above three days, though it had been recommended to the stage by some good person of quality." So indefatigable, indeed, was the diligence of Wilks, that he seemed to love his profession as a good man does virtue, for its own sake. In a new comedy, he once happened to complain of a crabbed speech in his part, which gave him more trouble to study than all the rest, and he applied to the author to soften or shorten it. The dramatist, that he might make the matter quite easy to him, fairly cut it all out; but when Wilks went home from the rehearsal, he thought it such an indignity to his memory that anything should be deemed too hard for him, that he actually made himself perfect in that speech, though he knew it was never to be spoken.

Soon after his first appearance in Sir Harry Wildair, he became acquainted with three young gentlewomen, dress-makers, the daughters of a Captain Knapton of Southampton, who left a competent estate to his eldest son, and respectable fortunes to his other children. Through some mismanagement, not imputed to themselves, these young ladies were obliged to work for a livelihood. One of them Wilks married, and they had several children.

Upon the death of Mrs. Mumford, her parts were given to Mrs. Rodgers, who was acknowledged to be a very good actress; but when Mrs. Oldfield appeared, Wilks, then one of the joint managers of the Haymarket, thought fit to assign them over to the *debutante*. This was not done out of any pique to Mrs. Rodgers, nor partiality for Mrs. Oldfield, but simply because the latter was the better actress. The correctness of his judgment was in the end confirmed; but Mrs. Rodgers became so clamorously incensed at his injustice, as she deemed it, that she quitted the theatre, and went to the opposition party. The town took her part, and believing she had been greatly injured, was so irritated against Mrs. Oldfield, that, as often as she offered to act in any of Mrs. Rodger's parts, she was assailed with cat-calls, and the other sounds and missiles of damnation. This state of things continued for the space of three months. At last, a plan was devised to pacify and please the town, which had the desired effect.

It was so arranged, that the rival heroines should choose such parts as pleased them best, and whoever performed to the most advantage, of which the audience were to be the judge, should supply Mrs. Mumford's place. This proposal was so reasonable, that the nobility and gentry, who were in those days the patrons of the drama, came into it without hesitation; and Mrs. Oldfield having chosen the part

of Lady Lurewell, in *The Trip to the Jubilee*, performed it with such tact and talent, that she gained the unanimous applause of the whole house. The next night was allotted to Mrs. Rodgers, and great interest was made in her behalf by her partisans; but whether she was conscious of her inability to equal Mrs. Oldfield, or was affected by some other cause, certain it is that, to the great mortification of her friends, she refused to be a competitor, and Mrs. Oldfield was, in consequence, honoured with the part, which she performed with great éclat. Thus ended a controversy which had kept the town, or at least the theatres, in an uproar for a quarter of a year.

The impartial conduct of the manager was highly approved, and his professional judgment duly appreciated by the public. The parts he played, and the reckless gaiety of his manner in them, were calculated to procure for him the character of a rake; but, although he certainly was not altogether free from blemish, he was yet, for an actor of that period, well-conducted and prudent.

Though his talents lay principally in comedy, he played some parts in tragedy with great and merited applause, particularly *Hamlet*, and *Mad Tom* in *King Lear*; nor could any measure of applause pervert his modesty and good temper. His old friend Ashbury, coming to London to obtain a renewal of his patent for the Dublin Theatre, went privately to see him in *Hamlet*; and when the play was over, stepped behind the scenes, to compliment him on his success, and the improvement he had made. Wilks was extremely pleased to see his old master, for so he always called him, and engaged him to dine with him next day. When the cloth was removed, Ashbury desired Mr. Wilks to bring the part of *Hamlet*, and read it to him, which he accordingly did, and the old gentleman convinced him of no less than fifteen errors in one act. Wilks received the criticism with thankfulness, and he subsequently endeavoured to correct himself according to the hints of his old master.

It is clear enough, that the fame of Wilks stands lower with posterity than in his own time, when he was not considered merely as the fine gentleman of the stage, but possessed a high reputation for his tragic talents. Sir Richard Steele, in speaking of him as a tragedian, says, "To beseech gracefully, to approach respectfully, to pity, to mourn, to love, are the places wherein Wilks may be said to shine with the utmost beauty." And Davies, in his *Dramatic Miscellanies*, remarks, "that he understood the tender passions in a superior degree; and when, with those attributes, we combine his tall, erect person, his pleasing aspect, and his elegant address, no unfavourable notion can be entertained of his fitness for many parts in tragedy. His *Prince of Wales* (Davies adds) was one of the most perfect exhibitions of the theatre. He threw aside the libertine gaiety of *Hal* with felicity, when he assumed the princely deportment of *Henry*. At the *Boar's Head* he was lively and frolicsome. In the reconciliation with his father his penitence was ingenuous, and his promises of amendment were manly and affecting. In the challenge with *Hotspur* his defiance was bold, yet modest, and his triumph over that impatient and imperious rebel was tempered by generous regret."

To the reader of *Henry the VIII.* the part of Buckingham may seem to be of little importance, but there is an affecting and quiet pathos in it which the actor of merit will not fail to make impressive. Wilks thought Buckingham entitled to his notice, and in the very first scene, the resentment borne by the character against Wolsey broke out in Wilks with an impetuosity not to be restrained; his action was vehement, and his step hurried; but when condemned, his demeanour was resigned and gentle, and his sorrow was dignified with the meekness of Christianity.

The Castalio of Wilks was long and justly admired. Indeed, it was said of him, in delicacy of address to ladies, he surpassed the best actors of his own time; and the charm of his manner in approaching Monimia at their first interview, was of the highest order of gentlemanly acting. His delight at the reconciliation in the second act, his rage and resentment in the third and fourth, and his tenderness and misery in the fifth, well entitled him to all the generous approbation with which he was uniformly received in that part.

In *Hamlet*, in speaking that impassioned soliloquy which discloses Hamlet's method to catch the conscience of the King, a passage too often negligently performed, and sometimes omitted, he displayed great power and warmth of disposition. But sometimes he exceeded in vehemence, and struck the judicious ear occasionally with something like dissonance. The soliloquy upon Death he spoke with a serene, melancholy countenance, and a grave despondency of action, in fine accordance with the philosophy of the sentiments. In the assumed madness with Ophelia, in which Garrick was afterwards thought too boisterous, Wilks retained enough of covert insanity, but at the same time he preserved the feelings of a lover, and the delicacy of a prince. The critics blamed him for his behaviour to the Ghost in the first act, but his conduct towards it with his Mother in the third could not be censured. His action in that great scene was a happy mixture of indignation allayed by tenderness, and his whole deportment was lofty and graceful. When he presented the pictures, his reproaches were guarded with filial reluctance; and when he came to the pathetic exclamation—"Mother, for love of grace!" there was something in his manner expressibly gentle, and yet powerfully persuasive.

His reputation, however, chiefly rested on his parts in genteel comedy; and by all tradition, his representation of Sir Harry Wildair was the most splendid impersonation of the careless gaiety of a young man whose high spirits and plentiful fortune threw a gloss over the greatest extravagances, and has never been equalled on the stage. So powerful was the impression created by him in this character, that Steele reprehends the audience for turning their attention to it while he was performing in other parts. In *Lord Townly* he has also been highly commended. In the scene where he felt himself reduced to the necessity of reproaching Lady Townly with her faults, his demeanour surpassed all praise, for he mixed a tenderness with his anger that softened into tears. "If the judgment of the crowd were infallible," says Cibber, "I am afraid we

shall be reduced to allow that the *Beggar's Opera* was the best written play, and Sir Harry Wildair, as Wilks played it, the best acted part that ever our English theatre had to boast of."

In the year 1708, some disagreements had arisen between the actors and the managers that caused an appeal to the Lord Chamberlain; and in consequence of his interposition, Swiny, who was then sole director of the Opera, received permission to enter into a private treaty with such of the actors in Drury-Lane as might be thought fit to head a company, under their own management, and to be sharers with him in the Haymarket. Those chosen for this charge were Wilks, Dogget, Mrs. Oldfield, and Colley Cibber.

From this time Wilks continued both to prosper as a man, and to improve as a player; but Cibber does not very highly commend him as a manager. He describes him as too fond of fame, and less solicitous for the pecuniary interests of the theatre than for the glory of the performance; and undoubtedly he makes these charges very clearly out. But still it should be recollected that it was during the period of Wilks's joint management that the English stage was conducted with the greatest success. Earlier epochs of the drama were distinguished for more poetic talent, and later times can boast of greater splendour, tinsel, and scenery; but no period in the history of the British theatre can show more uniform success, more general talent of so high a level in the players, nor audiences more distinguished for good manners and intelligence. With this general remark we may conclude our narrative of the professional career of Wilks.

He, without question, must have been an actor of no common qualifications, but good sense and diligence did as much for him as his natural endowments. There was, however, a warmth about him as a man rarer than his genius and acquirements.

To enumerate his generous and charitable actions, would be an endless task; but his uniform friendly conduct towards poor Farquhar is justly entitled to be recorded, both for its disinterestedness, its constancy, and its liberality: on one occasion, at the close of Farquhar's unhappy life, it was kind to tenderness.

The Earl of Orrery, who was then a great patron as well as master of learning, observing how little attention was paid to the merits of Farquhar, made him a present of a Lieutenant's commission in his own regiment, which the dramatist held for several years. Being then induced to solicit the Duke of Ormond for preferment, he was promised by his Grace a captaincy then vacant, and authorized to dispose of his lieutenantcy. Farquhar not doubting the sincerity of the Duke, sold his commission, and summoning his creditors together, paid off their bills. By this honest proceeding he had left himself almost penniless, but still confiding in the honour of the Duke, he frequently waited on his Grace to remind him of his promise. At last, the Duke told him one morning that the commission had been given to another gentleman at the instigation of the Colonel, but added, that if he would attend him to Ireland, (for he was then appointed Lord Lieutenant,) he would give him the first company of foot or troop of dragoons that became vacant. Farquhar, who was

naturally of a tender constitution and a sensitive heart, was greatly depressed by this disappointment; he bewailed the unhappy hour in which he disposed of his commission, and having spent the little residue of the money which remained, after paying his debts, he had nothing left to support himself and his family. Mr. Wilks one day missed him, and wondering at his absence, went to his lodgings, and found him overwhelmed with grief and despair. He inquired into the cause, and Farquhar related every thing that had passed between the Duke and him adding, that what gave him the greatest concern was his apprehension of having lost the Earl of Orrery's favour by parting with his commission.

Wilks endeavoured to cheer him, by representing that the Earl was a man of so much honour, that he would not show nor even harbour in his breast any resentment upon that account, especially as the fault, if any had been committed, ought to be laid at the door of the Duke of Ormond. He then gave him his best advice in his kindest manner, and said there was but one way left for him to pursue, viz. "Write a play, and it shall be got up with all imaginable expedition."

"Write?" cried Farquhar, starting from his chair, "is it possible that a man can write common sense who is heartless and has not one shilling in his pocket?"

"Come, come, George," replied Wilks, "banish melancholy, draw your drama, and bring the sketch with you to-morrow, for I expect you to dine with me. But as an empty pocket may cramp your genius, I desire you to accept my mite," and he presented him with twenty guineas.

When Wilks was gone, Farquhar retired to his study, and drew up the plot of *The Beaux Stratagem*, which he delivered to Wilks next day, and the design being approved, he was desired to proceed and not to lose a day with the composition. This comedy, which is one of the best extant, was begun, finished, and acted in the space of six weeks: but too late, with all that haste, for the advantage of the author. On the third night, which was for his benefit, Farquhar died of a broken heart.

Another anecdote of a different kind showed that the good-nature and liberality of Wilks was not confined to objects of compassion or of friendship. He originated the proposal, by which a benefit was granted to assist the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields to rebuild their church; and the splendid Corinthian fabric that has been so long one of the principal ornaments of the metropolis, still stands a monument of dramatic munificence. There is something singularly ridiculous in making the play-house a coadjutor of the church. It is subversive of all our established notions—accustomed to say with De Foe,

"Where'er the Lord erects a house of prayer,  
The Devil's sure to build a chapel near."

But we must go no farther, for in this case, and even in these days of decadence, we fear it must be said,



“ It will be found, upon examination,  
That Satan has the largest congregation ; ”

for whether the preachers are in fault, or the players more attractive, certainly St. Martin's-in-the-Fields cannot boast of being too greatly frequented.

Among other of the many instances of Wilks's kind-heartedness, we should not forget his liberality to the wretched Savage. The life and miseries of that unhappy poet are too well known to be related here, especially as I shall have occasion, in his own life, to speak both of the extraordinary source from which they arose, and the remarkable circumstances by which they were distinguished. In the shifts for shelter, to which this ill-fated man was reduced, he was sometimes obliged to take a dog's bed among the scenes of the playhouse. When Wilks was made acquainted with this, and the many hardships he had undergone, he went to the reputed mother of Savage, and so represented his desolate state to her that she was moved to give him sixty guineas ; at the same time, she assured Wilks that Savage was not, indeed, her son ; that he was palmed upon her for the child which she had put out to nurse, and that she could never acknowledge him as hers ; but as this is a point which Dr. Johnson, in his celebrated life of Savage, has disingenuously slurred over, we shall, in the proper place, treat of that particular more at large.

The second Mrs. Wilks having followed her predecessor, Wilks married again ; and even in his third marriage he was as much ruled by affection, and as disinterested, as in the former two. The lady was a gentlewoman in Westminster, whose narrow circumstances compelled her to work with her needle, to support herself and family. Wilks having bought some holland for shirts, desired one of his acquaintance to get them made by a good sempstress, and it happened that they were given to this respectable person. When half a dozen were finished, they were delivered to Wilks, who was so well pleased with the niceness of the work, that he requested the gentlewoman might herself bring the remainder to his lodgings. This she did, and from that day he looked upon her as the only woman that could then make him happy ; and, accordingly, he courted her in the most honourable manner.

A little time after their marriage, one of his acquaintance asked what could induce him, who had realised a plentiful fortune, to marry a woman who had none ? The reply of Wilks was characteristic. “ Sir, as Providence has been pleased to bless me with a competency sufficient to maintain myself and a family, could I do better than take to my arms one who wanted such a blessing ? I assure you, that as love was the only motive that prompted me to marry the gentlewoman who is now my wife, the unhappy circumstances she was in shall not in the least diminish, but rather serve to increase my affection to her ; and I am fully convinced, that as our love is reciprocal, there will be no room for complaint on either side. I shall look upon her children as my own ; they shall not want anything that is necessary or convenient for them, nor am I under any apprehension of their not discharging a filial duty to me, since they have been educated in the best and most virtuous principles.

His affection for this lady, and his tender regard for her children, could scarcely be paralleled; and such was their gratitude towards him, that it was not easy to determine, whether her love or their esteem for him was the greatest. Indeed, in the midst of what we would almost call a rich vein of professional peculiarity, he was a man of many virtues and very estimable qualities.

He died on the 27th of September, 1732, and was buried at midnight by his own order, to avoid ostentation, in the church of St. Paul's, Covent-garden, where a monument was afterwards erected to his memory. It appears by the age stated on his portrait, that his death took place in the sixty seventh year of his age, but the reader will have observed, that there is a discrepancy of four years as to the period of his birth.

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### NELL GWINN.

ELEANOR GWINN was the daughter of a tradesman in mean circumstances, who could not afford to bestow on her much education, but who took care to introduce her to as good company as possible, and to implant in her mind a sense of virtue and delicacy. At an early age she went to live with a widow lady, where a counsellor-at-law seeing her, was smitten with her beauty, and made love to her in rather a violent manner, but without success. This coming to the knowledge of the lady, who herself had a penchant for the lawyer, she became jealous, and ordered Nell to quit the house: she immediately did so, but met with a cold reception from her father, whose ear had been poisoned regarding her conduct by her mistress, by whom he was advised to send her into the country, to wean her from flattery and cure her of self-conceit, for which purpose the lady put ten guineas into his hand.

Her father believing the story, threatened to abandon her for ever, unless she consented to live with an aunt in Yorkshire. Our heroine, however, would not consent to go, but directed her attention towards the stage, on which, as she was remarkable for beauty and vivacity, she imagined her figure alone, without any theatrical requisites, would enable her to succeed; or, at least, if she could not wear the buskin with success, she apprehended no objection to her appearing as a lady in waiting, or one of the maids of the bed-chamber to the queens of the stage.

Animated with these fancies, she conceived one of the boldest schemes a girl of her education could possibly imagine. She left her father's house, took a genteel lodging, and as her appearance was elegant, she passed as a young lady just come from the country. In this retirement she applied herself to the reading of plays, and having a little money arising from her wages, and ten guineas from her lover the lawyer, she went often to the play, and took in as many ideas of theatrical action as she could possibly treasure in her mind. After living a month or two in this manner, she wrote a letter to Betterton,

inviting him to her lodgings, and disclosing her scheme of coming on the stage. When Betterton had heard her recitation, he advised her to give up all idea of becoming a performer, though he admitted her genius lay that way.

Her scheme being so far frustrated, and her money greatly diminished, she began to be alarmed lest poverty should overtake her. Her resolution to appear on the stage was, however, none daunted. She quitted her gay apartments, dressed herself as an orange-girl, and went to the playhouse to follow the occupation. Her beauty soon drew attention; the eyes of the players and of those sparkish gentlemen who frequent the theatre were fixed upon her, and their ears became greedy to hear the story and birth of the handsome orange-girl.

Betterton, soon discovered her, and astonished at her resolution, began to form better expectations of one whose propensity to the stage was so violent as to excite her to appear in so low a character for the sake of acquiring instruction. He advised her to follow her bent, and appointed one of his subalterns to initiate her in the principles of acting. This player became enamoured of her, but she rejected his proposals. He however prevailed upon her to quit the profession of orange-selling.

One day, when she was seeing her instructor perform the part of Creon in Dryden's *Œdipus*, her old lover, the Counsellor, in all the splendour of a consummate beau, came into the same box, and annoyed her ear with a repetition of his protestations. She heard him with indifference. He, however, resolved at all hazards to make her his own, and accordingly seized her as she came out of the theatre, hurried her into his chariot, and drove off for Richmond.

Half a year elapsed before Nell made any public figure again; but through the influence of her friend the Counsellor, she next season made her entry on the stage with very great éclat, not so much as a fine actress, however, as a fine woman; for though she certainly had a violent passion for the stage, her mediocrity as an actress shows the great difference between propensity and genius. She was never remarkable—her forte lay in speaking epilogues, and in exposing characters of vanity, with an air of coquetry and levity.

“The orange-basket her fair arm did suit,  
Laden with pippins and Hesperian fruit;  
This first step raised, to the wond’ring pit she sold  
The lovely fruit, smiling with streaks of gold.  
Fate now for her did its whole force engage,  
And from the pit she mounted to the stage;  
There in full lustre did her glories shine,  
And long eclips’d spread forth their light divine;  
There Hart and Rowley’s soul she did ensnare,  
And made a King\* a rival to a Play’r.”

Such is Lord Rochester’s account. Langbaine, in his characters of the Dramatic Poets, tells us, that she spoke a new prologue to

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\* Charles II.

Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. We find her afterwards acting the part of Queen Almahide in *The Conquest of Grenada*, Florimel in *The Maiden Queen*, Donna Jacintha in *The Mock Astrologer*, Valeria in *The Royal Martyr*. Besides the part of Valeria, she was appointed to speak the epilogue, in performing which she so captivated the King, who was present the first night of the play, that his Majesty, when she had done, went behind the scenes and carried her off.

But there is another version of the story. The King having gone to the play with the Duke of York as private gentlemen, they sat in the next box to Nell and her lover, a young nobleman ; and as soon as the play was finished, Charles, the Duke, and the nobleman, retired with Nell to a tavern, where his Majesty, by his attentions, greatly annoyed her friend. When the reckoning came to be paid, the King, searching his pockets, found he had not money to discharge it, his brother was in the same situation, and Nell observed that she had got into the poorest company she had ever before been with at a tavern. The nobleman, however, paid the reckoning, and parted both with his money and his mistress.

No sooner had she risen in the King's favour, than her heart, naturally warm and generous, overflowed in acts of kindness. One of the greatest of our national monuments of benevolence owes its rise to her ; and in consequence, it is said to the following circumstance. One day, when she was rolling about town in her carriage, a poor man soliciting charity, told her of his having been wounded in the Civil Wars in defence of the royal cause. Moved by his story, she considered it sad to think that wounds and scars, a stock for beggary, were often all the reward that soldiers received for defending their country, and that it was great ingratitude on the part of the nation to suffer them to sink to such distress. She represented to the King the case of misery she had seen, and entreated him to permit some scheme to be proposed for alleviating the sufferings of those in old age, whose wounds and infirmities rendered them unfit for service. This idea she also communicated to persons of distinction, who were public-spirited enough to encourage it, and Chelsea Hospital was the result.

Of all King Charles's mistresses, Nell Gwynn was undoubtedly the least offensive to the contending parties in the State. She never sided with either ; raised no enemies by her ambition, and lost no friends by her insolence. So far was she, indeed, from drawing aside the King from his affairs, that she often excited him to diligence.

One day, when he had been struggling in the council, and torn to pieces by the multiplicity of petitions for redress, the behaviour of his ministers, and the contentions of the Parliament, he retired very pensively to her apartment. Seeing his distress, she inquired the cause. "Oh, Nell, what shall I do," was his exclamation, "to please the people of England ? they tear me to pieces."

"If it please your Majesty," said she, "there is but one way left." "What is that ?"

"Dismiss your ladies, and mind your business : the people of England will soon be pleased."

This observation, the truth of which the King could not but acknowledge, struck him, but he never in his life had resolution enough to discharge one mistress, however disagreeable to the nation, or expensive to himself.

During the troubles between his son the Duke of Monmouth, and the Duke of York, his Majesty, who loved both his son and brother, behaved with so much indifference and negligence in the business, that it was with great difficulty he could be persuaded to attend the council, or despatch any affair whatever. One day, when the council had met and waited long for him, a member came to his apartments, but was refused admittance. His Lordship complained to Nell of his dilatoriness, upon which she wagered him a hundred pounds, that the King would that evening attend the council.

Accordingly she sent for Killigrew, naturally a buffoon, but a free favourite with his Majesty, and desired him to dress himself in every respect as if for a journey, and enter the King's apartments without ceremony. As soon as his Majesty saw him: "What, Killigrew! are you mad? Why, where are you going? Did not I order that nobody should disturb me?"

"I don't mind your orders, not I," said Killigrew; "and I am going as fast as I can."

"Why? Where?" said his Majesty—"where are you going?"

"Going! why to hell," said Killigrew.

"To hell, and what to do there?"

"To fetch back Oliver Cromwell, to take some care of the national concerns, for I am sure your Majesty takes none."

This expedient had the desired effect, for the King immediately went to council.

That his Majesty had a great regard for Nell appears strongly in his last moments, when he desired his brother not to let "poor Nell starve."

After the death of Charles she fell into obscurity; the bustle at court, the political cabals, the contentions between the popish and protestant interests, quite engaged the attention of the public, and she was lost sight of. For the remainder of her life she lived in retirement, and in that situation there is no account of her.

She was undoubtedly possessed of generous and distinguished talent; united wit, beauty, and benevolence; and if she deserve blame for impurity, there are few who can claim encomiums for such eminent virtues.

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## WILLIAM MOUNTFORT.

THE history of William Mountfort belongs more properly to human nature than to that of the stage, for his chief celebrity arose from actions more remarkable than those of the histrionic art. He was born in 1660—the *Biographia Britannica* says 1659, and died in 1692, in the thirty-third year of his age. It is of little consequence which

is the right date of his birth, especially in a work that lays more stress upon events, than on dates of births or burials.

He appears to have made his first appearance on the stage about the year 1682, and his rise was rapid. In 1685 he was chosen for the hero of Crown's "Sir Courtly Nice," and his performance of the part was esteemed honourable to his talents and judgment. His last new character was in Dryden's *Cleomenes*, in which, besides speaking the prologue, he acted the part of Cleanthes.

In person he was tall, well made, fair, and of an agreeable aspect; his voice clear, full, and melodious; and in tragedy he obtained great admiration as a lover. His address had a delightful recommendation in it from the natural tones of his voice; and of his words it is said,

"Like flakes of feather'd snow,  
They melted as they fell."\*

Mountfort was particularly renowned for his performance of one scene in *Alexander*, when he throws himself at the feet of Statira for pardon of his past infidelities. In it he displayed the great, the tender, the penitent, the despairing, the transported, and the amiable in the highest perfection. In comedy he was what is justly called the fine gentleman. In scenes of gaiety he never violated the respect due to the presence of an equal or superior, though inferior actors were in the parts. His only endeavour for attention was by true and masterly touches. He never laughed at his own jest but when the business of the scene rendered it necessary, and he had a particular talent in saying brilliant things in a lively manner. The wit of the poet was sharpened by his delivery. It is said that the agreeable was so natural to him, that even in the dissolute character of Rover, he seemed to wash off the guilt from the vice and to give it charms and merit.

He had, besides, a variety in his genius which few actors have aspired to. He could entirely change himself; could throw off the man of sense and assume the brisk, vain, rude, and lively coxcomb, the flashy pretender to wit, and the dupe of his own sufficiency. Of this talent he gave many amusing instances, particularly in *Sparkish*, in *The Country Wife*. In that of Sir Courtly Nice he was still more eminent; there the whole man was altered, and Mountfort was forgotten in his part. The insipid, soft civility, the elegant and formal mien, the drawling delicacy of voice, the stately flatness of his address, and the empty eminence of his attitudes, exhibited the highest merit that can be looked for in an actor. But he was cut off in the very middle of his career; and connected with the story are several curious circumstances calculated at once to interest and appal.

A Captain Hill had made proposals of marriage to Mrs. Bracegirdle, which were declined, in consequence, as he supposed, of a more than

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\* A bad imitation by Dryden, in the Spanish Friar, of the effect of Ulysses' speech in the Iliad,

Platonic attachment for Mountfort, and which at various times he threatened to revenge. Among Hill's associates was Lord Mohun, whose youth perhaps afforded some palliative for his share in the machination of debauchery to which Hill resorted. This nobleman engaged with him in a perfidious scheme for the abduction of Mrs. Bracegirdle, whom Hill proposed to carry off, and afterwards marry.

They arranged with an owner of hackney-coaches to provide a carriage and six horses to take them to Totteridge, and appointed him to wait with this conveyance at the Horse-Shoe tavern in Drury Lane. A party of soldiers were hired to assist in the exploit; and as Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had been supping at Mr. Page's in Prince's Street, was going down Drury Lane towards her lodgings in Howard Street, Strand, about ten o'clock at night, on Friday the 9th of December 1692, two of these soldiers pulled her away from Mr. Page, knocked her mother down, and tried to lift her into the carriage.

Her mother, upon whom the blow had providentially made but a slight impression, hung about her neck and detained her on the spot. While Page called for help, Hill ran at him with his sword drawn, and again endeavoured to get Mrs. Bracegirdle into the coach, but the alarm given by Page prevented him. Company came up, Hill insisted on seeing the lady home, and actually led her to the house in which she resided.

Lord Mohun, who during the scuffle was seated in the coach, joined Hill in Howard Street; the soldiers were dismissed, but the two friends, with swords drawn, paraded for about an hour and a half before Mrs. Bracegirdle's door. Mrs. Brown, the landlady of the house where Mrs. Bracegirdle lodged, went out and expostulated with Lord Mohun and Hill, and then went, or sent, to Mountfort's house, to warn Mrs. Mountfort of the danger to which her husband was exposed. The watch, on going their round between eleven and twelve o'clock, found the two accomplices drinking wine in the street, a waiter having brought it to them from an adjacent tavern. Mrs. Brown, at this juncture, observed Mountfort turn into Howard Street, apparently coming towards her house, and hurried to meet him, and to mention his danger; but he would not stop, nor allow her time for the slightest communication.

On gaining the spot where Lord Mohun stood, Hill being a little farther off, respectfully saluted him, and was received with politeness. Lord Mohun then hinted that Mountfort had been sent for by Mrs. Bracegirdle, in consequence of her projected abduction: a charge immediately denied.

Mountfort then expressed a hope, with some warmth, that his Lordship would not vindicate Hill, who approaching in time to catch the substance of the remark, said hastily, he could vindicate himself, and gave him a blow, and challenged him to fight. They both went into the middle of the street, and after two or three passes, Mountfort was mortally wounded, and languished till the next day, when he expired.

Hill fled, and Mohun, on the 31st of January 1693, was tried by the House of Peers as an accomplice, and acquitted.

Without investigating the circumstances of this street brawl—this foul affair, it seems, though not quite relative to the matter, proper to mention, that although Lord Mohun was undoubtedly warmly attached to his friend, and in many respects full of the lower kind of chivalric feeling, yet in few men was there ever an instance of more evident fatality. About seven years after his acquittal, he was tried again upon a charge of murder, from which he was also acquitted by his Peers. Ultimately, however, he died of his wounds, after killing a third, the Duke of Hamilton, in a duel.

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## SAMUEL SANDFORD.

I CONSIDER the life of Samuel Sandford as affording a curious specimen of particular endowment. By the best accounts, he appears to have been a respectable comic actor; but it was in tragedy, and a special line, that he chiefly shone. All his contemporaries speak in high terms of his merits in dark parts, and there can be no doubt, that in some of them he displayed great force and dignity. He has been called the Spagnoletto of the stage, and was, beyond all comparison, excellent in disagreeable characters. As the chief pieces of Spagnoletto were of human nature in pain and agony, Colley Cibber says of Sandford, that "Upon the stage he was generally flagitious as a Creon in *Œdipus*; a Maligni in *The Villain*, a tragedy by Thomas Porter; an Iago in *Othello*; or a Machiavel in *Cæsar Borgia*. The painter might think the quiet objects of nature too tame for his pencil, and therefore chose to indulge its full power upon those of violence and horror." In Sandford it was endowment.

But distinguished as Sandford was in atrocious representations, it was not from choice, but on account of deformities which almost unfitted him for the stage. He was low and crooked, and so conspicuous were these bodily defects, that he could with no propriety be admitted into noble or amiable parts. The public became so accustomed to see him in the line which Nature had marked out for him, that they would at last scarcely tolerate him in any other but a villain's character.

I have not ascertained the date of Sandford's birth, but he made his first appearance on the stage in 1663, under the auspices of Sir William Davenant. The first part for which he is mentioned is Sampson in *Romeo and Juliet*; he soon after sustained a minor part in *The Adventures of Five Hours*; and when Davenant produced his *Man's the Master*, he and Harris sung an epilogue in the character of two street ballad-singers. He was the Foresight in *Love for Love*.

When Betterton and his associates seceded to the new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, he refused to join them as a partner, but they engaged him at a salary of three pounds a week.

The exact time of his death is not clearly known, but as he is not mentioned by Downs among the actors engaged to Swiney in the



latter end of 1706, it is supposed that he died during the previous six years, for he certainly did exercise his profession in 1700.

His ancestors were long settled at Sandford, a village in Shropshire, and he prided himself in the superiority of his birth ; but there was a Thomas Sandford, one of Shakspeare's fellow comedians, who has been supposed to be the grandfather of Samuel.

Perhaps it may be considered as one of the merits of this player's personal conduct, that very little is known of him out of his profession ; for in the relation just made, all is comprehended that can be properly said of him as a man, and it is only as a player that we are left to regard him. Indeed, the allusion to his pride of birth, would seem to imply that he kept himself aloof from the other actors ; and Colley Cibber almost directly intimates, that he was regarded among them with some invidia. "It is not improbable," says he, "but that from Sandford's so masterly personating characters of guilt, the inferior actors might think his success chiefly owing to the defects of his person." And he proceeds to tell his readers, that it was much the fashion in King Charles the Second's time for stage bravoes and murderers to make themselves as hideous as possible ; a low artifice, which was carried to such extravagance, that the King himself, who was black-browed and of a swarthy complexion, once said of the murderers in *Macbeth*, "What is the reason we never see a rogue in the play, but, godsfish ! they always clap a black periwig upon him, when it is well known that one of the greatest rogues in England always wears a fair one." To whom the King alluded is not now known, but it must either have been a personal friend or foe.

In his performance Sandford acted so well, that he was ever identified with the part he performed, in so much that the applause was often withheld from him which he justly merited, merely because the people had a repugnance to the part he so ably acted. But to some, and among others to his eulogist Cibber, Sandford always appeared the honestest man in proportion to the spirit with which he exposed the wicked characters. This should uniformly have been the case ; for it is the object and business of the stage to give pleasure ; and when it carries its representation so far as to make them produce pain, it goes beyond its right and natural limit. In so far, therefore, as Sandford, to the judicious spectator, gave only satisfaction he must have been a great actor, and been essentially a contributor to the true and laudable use of the stage ; even when he failed, he may be honestly called a theatrical martyr to poetical justice.

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### MRS. ELIZABETH BARRY.

WITH whatever adventures the players in early life are distinguished, it is certain that, after they have once attained a footing in their profession, they are subject to fewer vicissitudes than the commonalty of mankind.

Mrs. Elizabeth Barry was the daughter of Edward Barry, Esq., a barrister of some eminence in the early part of the reign of Charles I., and who, in consequence of raising a regiment for the service of that Prince in the Civil Wars, was afterwards more generally known as Colonel Barry. By this proceeding, and the ill success which attended the royal cause, Mr. Barry was entirely ruined, and his children obliged to provide for their own maintenance. Lady Davenant gave to this daughter, Elizabeth, a genteel education, and made her a constant associate, by which the graces of her behaviour were essentially improved; and finally, in the year 1673, she was received into the Duke's company.

But her efforts at first were extremely unpropitious, insomuch that the managers deemed her totally incapable of making any adequate progress. At the end of the first year she was discharged among others who were thought to be a useless expense to it. When Cibber saw her first, she had not attained the celebrity she was destined to arrive at; but she had an august person, a fine understanding, and was at the time one of whom the world was disposed to think well. Three times, according to Curl's History of the Stage, she was dismissed, as disappointing the expectations of her friends, and as often, by the interest of her benefactor, reinstated. When Otway produced his *Alcibiades*, her merit, however, was such, as not only to excite the attention of the public, but to obtain the author's most glowing applause. Next season she performed the lively character of Mrs. Lovit, in Etherege's *Man of Mode*; and, in 1680, her performance of Monimia, in the *Orphan* of Otway, seems to have raised her gradually to the highest eminence of her profession. The part of Belvidera, two years after in *Venice Preserved*, and Isabella, in Southern's *Fatal Marriage*, in 1694, procured her universal distinction.

When Mrs. Barry first appeared, her only pretensions to notice were a good air and manner, and a powerful and pleasing voice. Her ear, however, was extremely defective, and several eminent judges despaired of her success; but still she regularly improved, and at last placed herself indisputably in the highest rank of her profession. In characters of greatness, she acquired high renown for elevation and dignity. "Her voice and motion," says Colley Cibber, "were superb and majestic—her voice full, clear, and strong; no violence of passion was too much for her; and when distress or tenderness possessed her, she subsided into the most affecting melody and softness." In the art of exciting pity, she enjoyed a power beyond all the actresses of her time. Gildon, in his *Life of Betterton*, says, "I have heard him say that she never uttered—

‘ Ah ! poor Castalio !’

without weeping." In the gentle passions of Monimia and Belvidera she has never been excelled. In scenes of anger, despair, and resentment, she was impetuous and terrible, and yet she poured forth the sentiment with the most enchanting harmony; but it was by the soft and gentle affections that she gained the enviable distinction of the "famous,"—at first applied to her in derision, but

such were the fair merits of her endeavours, that it was fixed to her in compliment ; and yet she was not, in many respects, a correct or an amiable woman. There is, for example, no reason to dispute her criminal intimacy with the Earl of Rochester ; this much, however, may be said of her, that she fixed his affections more strongly than any other female. His letters addressed to Madame B——, first printed in the edition of his poems by J. Tonson, in 1716, are generally said to have been his Lordship's epistolary correspondence with this lady. In some of them he speaks with great fondness of a child he had by her, and to whom he afterwards, by will, left an annuity of forty pounds.

The temptations to which a popular actress is exposed are numerous and powerful ; perhaps licentious vice, too, obtains an excuse readily among this class of persons ; but they should recollect that the honours of triumph are always proportioned to the dangers of trial. There is no reason why the stage should not be as rich in virtue as the warmest friends of the profession desire to see it attain, and therefore, we gladly draw a veil over the moral improprieties of Mrs. Barry, and would describe her deviations from chastity as more owing to her innate feelings than to her profession. Davies ascribes her death to the bite of a favourite lapdog, who had been seized, unknown to her, with madness. She died on the 7th of March, 1713, aged fifty-five years, and was buried in Acton church-yard.

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### MRS. ANNE OLDFIELD.

As we bring the history of the stage downward, we find the actors begin to meet with formidable rivals in the actresses, and perhaps with few exceptions did they encounter one of more gaiety of heart than in the lady whose brief memoirs now claim our attention.

Anne Oldfield was born in the year 1683. and would, perhaps, never have appeared on the stage, had not her father, a captain in the army, squandered her little fortune at an early period of her life. In consequence of this disaster she went to reside with her aunt, who kept the Mitre tavern in the then St. James's Market, where Farquhar, the dramatist, one day overheard her reading Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, in which she displayed such ease and spirit, that, struck by her evident advantages for the stage, he framed an excuse to enter the little parlour behind the bar, in which Miss Nancy was sitting.

Farquhar fell a victim to her charms, and it has been said, from a desire of possessing what the theatre would give him the means to attempt, he urged her to try her talents on the stage, and after a little decent entreaty, not without trouble on Farquhar's part, she made her debut.

Sir John Vanburgh frequented the house, and was known to Mrs. Oldfield's mother, from whom he received a communication of the great warmth with which Farquhar extolled her daughter's abilities.

Vanburgh immediately addressed himself to the young lady, and having ascertained that her fancy tended to parts of a sprightly nature, he recommended her to Rich, the manager of Drury-Lane, by whom she was immediately engaged at a salary of fifteen shillings a week.

Her talents soon rendered her distinguished among the young actresses of the time, and a man of quality having been heard to express himself much in her favour, Mr. Rich, who was no judge of merit himself, increased her terms to twenty shillings a week. Sir John Vanburgh has, however, the great honour of bringing forward this eminent actress, by giving her the part of Alinda, in *The Pilgrim*, a gentle character, which well became that diffidence for which she was then chiefly distinguished.

But it was not till 1705 that she was allowed to have attained her professional eminence. In that year she first became, properly speaking, publicly known; and in *Lady Betty Modish*, a character in *The Careless Husband* of Cibber, she attracted the attention she had laboured to attain. She was tall, genteel, and well-shaped; her expressive features were enlivened by large and intelligent eyes, which she had a method of half shutting at times, that was delightfully comic and agreeable; in air and elegance of manner she excelled all her competitors, and was greatly superior to most of the young actresses in compass and harmony of voice.

In tragedy, Mrs. Oldfield, from not liking it so well as comedy, never reached so much dignity as it was in her power to have done; and in the full round of her glory she used to slight her best personations of the serious drama, saying sometimes, "I hate to have a page dragging my train about; why don't they give Porter these parts? she can put on a better tragedy-face than I can." But the constant applause by which she was followed, so far reconciled her to them, that she generally at last consented to appear in tragic parts without much reluctance. Thomson's *Sophonisba* was the latest of this description, and upon her action and deportment the author has expressed himself with great ardour in the following lines.

"Mrs. Oldfield in the character of *Sophonisba*, has excelled what even in the fondness of an author I could either wish or imagine; the grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable." And his praise is not more liberal than just. The style of grandeur in which she uttered this line—

"Not one base word of Carthage, for thy soul—"

was at the time greatly commended, and produced an astonishing effect on the audience.

But her *Lady Townly* has been universally admitted as her *chef-d'œuvre*. She slid so gracefully into the foibles and excesses of a fine woman confident in her wit and the strength of her charms, that no successor in the part has ever equalled her.

Notwithstanding her questionable private life, she was often invited to the houses of women of fashion as unblemished in character as elevated in rank, for in those days it was the custom to invite

distinguished professional people entirely for their public qualities alone, and without reference to their private delinquencies. Even the Royal family did not disdain to see Mrs. Oldfield at their parties. George the Second and Queen Caroline, when Prince and Princess of Wales, often condescended to converse with her.

It is supposed that she was engaged in a tender intercourse with Farquhar, and was the Penelope of his amatory correspondence.—She lived successively with Arthur Manwaring, one of the most accomplished characters of the age, and with General Churchill; by each of whom she had a son. One day the Princess of Wales told her that she heard that General Churchill and she were married. “So it is said, may it please your Royal Highness, but we have not owned it yet.”

In private life, Mrs. Oldfield was generous, witty, and well-bred, and she was kind to Savage, though she disliked the man. It has been said, that to her influence he is indebted for his pardon when he was so unjustly cast for death. It is not, however, quite true that she allowed him an annuity, as ascribed to her by Dr. Johnson. With Pope she was never a favourite; indeed the players of no sex were ever such with that acute and waspish satirist. She, it is well known, was the dying coquette of one of his epistles; and yet he did not always treat her with his wonted severity, though he never lost an opportunity of giving her a fling.\* In fact, she was a curious compound of sense and beauty, and hazarded with impunity many foolish sayings, which she would, perhaps, have been the first herself to laugh at. One day she happened to be in some danger in a Gravesend-boat, and when the rest of the passengers lamented their fate, she put on an air of conscious dignity, and told them their deaths would be only a private loss: “but I am a public concern!”

She died on the 23rd of October, 1730, not only lamented for her rare professional endowments, but her agreeable qualities as a woman. Had her birth placed her in a higher rank of life, she had certainly appeared in reality what she was often on the stage—an agreeable, gay woman of quality, a little too conscious of her natural beauty. In the wearing of her person it is said she was particularly fortunate—her figure was always improving to her thirty-sixth year; her excellence in acting was ever progressive, and she possessed an inestimable quality of never undertaking any part she liked, without having all the helps in it that another could possibly suggest, and yet it was hard to give her any hint she was unable to improve. She was, indeed, in all that respected her profession, tractable, judicious, and modest. Upon her extraordinary merits as Lady Townly, the managers made her a present of fifty guineas beyond her salary; and in her last illness, she had the good sense and generosity to decline the residue of her salary. She was, to the last scene she acted, the delight of her spectators—

Where in the whole such various beauties shine,  
’Twere idle upon errors to repine.

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\* Engaging Oldfield! who with grace and ease  
Could join the arts to ruin and to please.

## RICHARD SAVAGE.

THIS vagabond was so poor a player, that had not his life been superbly written by Dr. Samuel Johnson, it should not have received a place in this work; but the singular merits of that celebrated piece of biography, and the no less remarkable misrepresentations, as I conceive, by which it is deformed, induce me to attempt a version that shall not be so liable to objections on the score of probability. Savage was one of the Doctor's associates, and whatever affection could dictate, talent suggest, and eloquence enforce, has been employed to adorn and exalt his character.

The Countess of Macclesfield, a dissolute woman, had, for some time prior to the year 1697, lived in vexation with the Earl her husband, when their unhappiness rose to such a pitch, that she resolved to be divorced from him, and accordingly declared the child, with which she was then great, begotten by the Earl Rivers. In those days the legislature was less scrupulous in many of its proceedings than it is in ours. Without obtaining, in the usual manner, a divorce in the Spiritual Court, the Earl of Macclesfield proceeded at once to parliament, and procured an act, by which his marriage was dissolved, and the children of his wife illegitimated. While his Lordship was prosecuting this object, the Countess was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a son: at his baptism, Earl Rivers stood godfather, and gave him his own name.

The circumstances under which Savage was born, naturally, perhaps, rendered him an object unpleasant to his mother; he was the witness of her guilt, and she would feel towards him as if he had been the cause of her degradation. It might have been otherwise, and instead of distaste to the sight of the infant, she might, in one of those caprices of affection which nature, in similar cases, sometimes produces, have cherished him with intenser maternal fondness. In this, however, the more common law prevailed; and she accordingly sent him from her, committing him to the care of a poor woman, who was directed to educate him as her own. Her mother, the Lady Mason, was the agent in the business; and, notwithstanding that Dr. Johnson probably received his information from Savage himself, I cannot discern the equity of the opinion he expresses concerning this lady, nor was he justified in making use of the strong insinuation to her prejudice which he has done. He says—"Her mother, the Lady Mason, whether in approbation, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child."

The conduct of Lady Mason, in this transaction, is susceptible of a far more charitable interpretation; and unless her general character warranted the suspicion, Dr. Johnson has treated her with libellous injustice. As a mother, she could not but be grieved at her daughter's dishonour. It was natural that she should desire to see the witness of her disgrace removed from under the eyes of their friends and associates; and, in engaging to effect the necessary arrangements with the nurse, she but performed a natural part. It is not true that

Savage was "born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence ;" on the contrary, he was born with a taint that rendered him obnoxious to those who were interested in his welfare ; and Dr. Johnson, in the manner in which he speaks of this, does not evince his wonted acumen. He refers the feelings on the subject to a state of nature. He ought to have recollected, that the parties concerned in the expulsion of the bastard were habituated to an artificial condition, in which the feelings of nature are weaker in influence than the usages and institutions of society. The utmost degree of culpability which I am able to discover in the conduct of the mother, even upon Dr. Johnson's statement, amounts only to a wish to keep the child out of sight ; for it by no means appears, in any stage of the transaction, that concealment was at all sought—quite the contrary. Before the birth, the bastardy was proclaimed, and the subject discussed in the House of Lords : and at the birth, Earl Rivers, the assigned father, openly came forward, and assumed the paternity, as far as the law and the custom of the country would admit. Mrs. Lloyd, a lady who assisted at the christening in the capacity of godmother, so long as she lived, looked upon the child with tenderness : she knew that he had been removed from his mother by the Lady Mason, and that it was intended he should not be publicly brought up as her son.

Mrs. Lloyd continued her attentions to Savage till he was ten years old ; and, at her death, she bequeathed to him a legacy of three hundred pounds. It is clear from this statement that there was no concealment for ten years. Dr. Johnson says of the legacy, that, as Savage "had none to prosecute his claim—to shelter him from oppression, or to call in the law to the assistance of justice—her will (Mrs. Lloyd's) was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid."

I am sure the reader will agree with me, that this is a very "lame and impotent conclusion ;" and that it is rankly imbued with that coarse misrepresentation which vulgar minds make, as it were, in extenuation of their debasement, when they have family connexions which they have not been able to preserve. Though, for a time, the executors of Mrs. Lloyd might have withheld the legacy from her godson, yet they could not always have done so. When he came of age, he was competent surely to have prosecuted them ; and he was certainly not without the capacity to discern his right, nor the disposition to annoy where he thought that right denied. The whole story as related by Dr. Johnson, is full of discrepancies, and bears upon its forehead the marks of fallacy. He was himself incapable of making untrue statements ; and, save in this affair, his judgment has been esteemed of a higher and more accurate order, even though it has been a general opinion that he was on some points the most inveterately prejudiced of mankind. It is surprising that the Doctor never suspected that the reason why Savage did not obtain the legacy might have been that he could not prove his identity.

After the death of Mrs. Lloyd, Lady Mason still continued her care ; and, under her direction, Savage was placed at a small

grammar-school near St. Albans, where he was called by the name of his nurse. Here he was initiated in literature; and being of a lively genius, it is reasonable to suppose that his progress was above mediocrity. While Savage was at school, Earl Rivers died. "He had frequently inquired for his son," says Dr. Johnson, but on what authority is not stated, "and had always been amused with evasive answers. On his deathbed, however, he thought it his duty to provide for him, and therefore demanded a positive account, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied;" and, the Doctor adds, "his mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined, at least, to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead—which is, perhaps, the first instance of a lie invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself though he should lose it."

I would rather believe that Dr. Johnson was in error, than that Nature went so far wrong. There is no shadow of evidence to show that Mrs. Brett—as the alleged mother of Savage was now called, in consequence of a second marriage with Colonel Brett, who became a patentee of Drury-lane Theatre—was in personal communication with Earl Rivers. But, granted that she had told him, or wrote to him, that their son was dead, might it not have been the case? for, as I shall have occasion to show, besides the fact relative to Mrs. Lloyd's legacy already noticed, the identity of the Countess of Macclesfield's son, and Savage, the poet and player, is by no means satisfactorily established. Be it also observed, that Earl Rivers could not but know, in the long course of more than ten years, in which the child was under the direction of his grandmother, Lady Mason, that she was the proper person to ask concerning him. But to suppose that, in so long a period, Earl Rivers, who had no objection to acknowledge the child—who was the child's godfather—never once inquired after him, is to accuse human nature, in his Lordship, of as great an exception to its customs, as in the case of the mother: probability revolts at the supposition. Perhaps Lady Mason might have been by this time dead; but, as I have shown, there was no special concealment, at least from Lord Rivers, of the existence of the child, so long as he lived; nor was it likely, when the part which Mrs. Lloyd acted towards him is considered, that there could have been any difficulty, so long as she was alive, of tracing him.

Dr. Johnson assumes that the wickedness of the mother, in this instance, was true: he even goes so far as to imply that Lord Rivers "had, in his will, bequeathed to Savage six thousand pounds; but that, on receiving the account of his death, he altered the will, and bestowed the legacy on another person." I think the fact of the case is, that the son of Earl Rivers and Lady Macclesfield was, at this time, really dead; and this opinion is strengthened by the over endeavour of Savage to exaggerate her unnatural enmity. If she had been his mother, there was on his part as great a deficiency of natural feeling towards her, as there was on her part towards him.



Truly, if we consider the number of years during which Lord Rivers, his father and godfather, never inquired after him, and the reciprocal conduct of the mother and the son, they must have been three of the most extraordinary personages ever described, for deficiency of natural affection.

This interception of the provision which Lord Rivers intended to make, is rendered still more improbable by what Dr. Johnson, on the authority of Savage, immediately after states, viz. that his mother "endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations." Now be it remembered, that his mother became afterwards the wife of the patentee of the very theatre which Savage most frequented.

"By whose kindness this scheme of kidnapping was counteracted, or by what interposition Mrs. Brett was induced to lay aside her design, I know not. It is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in such an action." After stating this, Dr. Johnson makes the following observations, the justice or common-sense of which is by no means apparent—"It may be conceived," says he, "that those who had, by a long gradation of guilt, hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, would yet be shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want—to expose him without interest and without provocation; and Savage might, on this occasion find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before."

Without more particularly adverting to the improbability altogether of kidnapping the boy for Virginia, I would only remark on the plain nonsense of Dr. Johnson's observations. Was it at all necessary to such a kidnapping scheme, that the mother should disclose to the agents her relationship to the boy they were to convey out of the country in so surreptitious a manner? and if they previously knew the relationship, and were creatures capable of executing such an unnatural machination, would they have scrupled to get this rich lady so effectually into their power as they would have done, either by executing her scheme, or by seemingly conniving at it, by taking her son into their own charge? If they did not know of the connexion, what comes of the Doctor's moral revulsion of the kidnappers? This part of the story, which rests on Savage's authority alone—and Savage was never respected by his contemporaries for his probity—I have no hesitation in at once rejecting, as in its conception an extravagant monstrosity; for the mother in all this period seems to have left the management of the child entirely to her own mother, Lady Mason, and no cause nor motive had occurred to move her to intercept the intended legacy, far less to instigate her to the wickedness of sending her son to slavery in Virginia.

Dr. Johnson, in the same frame of insatiable credulity, continues—"Being hindered, by whatever means, of banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in

poverty and obscurity in his own ; and that his station in life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her—(and yet she was the wife of a patentee of the theatre)—she ordered him to be placed with a shoemaker in Holborn, that after the usual time of trial he might become his apprentice.” The good Doctor, in the simplicity of his heart, states this on the authority of Savage himself. Now, mark how loosely this tale hangs together. In the first place, it supposes the mother all this time to be spontaneously actuated by something like a demoniacal virulence against her son, although it is manifest that Lady Mason was the agent in all that related to the child by Lord Rivers. Now, was Lady Mason dead when this project of the apprenticeship was hatched ? It is not so said. Then who was the agent to negotiate with the shoemaker ? Did that agent know of the relationship of the child ? Was the shoemaker so incurious as to take no step to ascertain who were the connexions of this mysterious apprentice ? Was no money to be paid to the shoemaker ? The story—though it be true, in fact, that Savage was an apprentice to a shoemaker in Holborn—appears utterly improbable in the alleged anterior machination. If Lady Mason had been alive, she would of course, from her previous part in the plot, have been the negotiator, through the nurse, as whose son the bastard passed ; and here again the character of Lady Mason comes to be considered. Has it ever been blemished in all this business ? and she was, at least, known to the nurse, if the nurse did not know who were the parents of the child. But observe what follows.

While Savage is apprentice to the shoemaker, the nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, dies, and Savage, as her son, proceeds to “ take care of those few effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own.” Now had this old woman no relations who knew that the child had been placed with her ? none to interfere, as people in their condition of life were likely to do, that he should have been permitted to take possession of her effects ? Mark also ; in taking possession of her effects, Dr. Johnson says, “ he opened her boxes and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.” This is curious. Is it probable that Lady Mason would have committed herself by writing any such letters to the old woman, had there existed such a wish for concealment as it is attempted to make us believe ? That there may have been letters from Lady Mason, which suggested the idea of inquiring to whom they related ; and that Savage, by inquiry, might have ascertained they concerned the child of Lady Macclesfield and Lord Rivers, which had been placed while an infant with his mother, the nurse, is highly probable ; and from the character of his mind, it is not at all unlikely that he should have either imagined himself to be that child, or fancied that, with the evidence, he might pass himself off as such. My opinion is that the latter was the case, and that the poet and player Richard Savage was, in his capacity of Lady Macclesfield’s son, an imposter. A remarkable gleam of light is thrown upon the

probability of this notion by a circumstance hitherto unnoticed. The famous trial of the Annesley family began about this time, and it is curious in how many points the abduction of the heir of that family resembles the pretended machinations of which Savage gives an account of his being himself, both in what was done and intended, the object.\*

When Savage had examined the papers found in the box of his nurse, or mother as I am disposed to think she really was, he remained no longer satisfied with his employment as a shoemaker, but resolved to share the affluence of the lady he was determined to consider as his mother ; and accordingly without scruple, he made use of every art to awaken her tenderness and attract her regard. It is singular enough, however, that this was done through the medium of letters ; the natural course would have been, had there been no consciousness of deception, to have gone to her at once in person, for he had no reason at that time to think, though she might desire that her child should remain unknown, that she would reject him in the manner she did. Dr. Johnson says, that "neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him." Now this is not correct ; for she did acknowledge that she had had a child, but which was dead, and she did deny that Savage was her son. In fact, being persuaded that he was an imposter, all the extraordinary antipathy with which she regarded him is explained, by the simple circumstance of her believing that her own child was dead, and the natural mortification that she could not but suffer at the revival, after the lapse of so many years, of her dishonour and public degradation.

Failing in the speculation of establishing himself as the son of a lady of fashion and of great wealth, he had recourse to his natural talents. At this period the Bangorian controversy agitated the literary world, and filled the press with pamphlets and the coffee-houses with disputants. On this subject Savage made his first attempt, without any other knowledge of the question than what he had casually collected from conversation ; and wrote and published a poem against the Bishop. The merit or success of this performance is not known ; Savage himself became ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it by destroying all the copies he could collect.

Of the talent of this remarkable adventurer there can be no question ; he was still but in his eighteenth year when he wrote *Woman's a Riddle*, which was brought out on the stage, but from which the unhappy author derived no profit. The piece had been originally offered by him to the theatre, and was returned as unlikely to succeed

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\* A summary of the Annesley case as it was tried, and as it appeared in the Appeal, which brings it within the State-trials, was published as "The Memoirs of an unfortunate Young Nobleman, returned from a Thirteen Years' Slavery in America, where he had been sent by the wicked contrivance of his cruel Uncle." Without the unnatural feeling of the mother, the Annesley case is not more extraordinary than Savage has made his,

in representation. In consequence of which rejection he gave the manuscript to Mr. Bullock, and he having more interest, changed it in some respects, and brought it upon the stage.

In what way he maintained himself at this time is not explained ; but in two years after his first play he obtained a representation of another comedy, *Love in a Veil*, with, however, little better pecuniary success, for it appeared so late in the season, that he obtained no other benefit from it than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele and Mr. Wilks the actor.

Sir Richard having heard his story, declared in his favour with all the warmth of his character, promoted his interest with zeal, related his alleged misfortunes on every occasion calculated to bespeak sympathy, applauded his merit, and took every opportunity of recommending him to the favour of others, "The inhumanity of his mother," said Sir Richard, "has given him a right to find every good man his father."

Nor did he admit Savage to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, which appeared to consist in assisting Sir Richard to evade his creditors. But although for a time the friendship of Sir Richard was necessary to Savage, his practices and example were not calculated to improve his habits. The kindness of the Knight did not, however, end in slight favours ; on the contrary, his affection ripened to such a degree, that he proposed Savage should marry his natural daughter, on whom he agreed to bestow a thousand pounds. But Sir Richard who was in promise and intention a man of great generosity, so conducted his affairs, that he was never able to raise the money, and the marriage was in consequence deferred from time to time, and was in the end broken off entirely, in consequence of the imprudence of Savage himself, in representing some of his patron's foibles before persons who he had not suspected would be so malicious as to prove tale-bearers.

Savage being thus again abandoned to fortune, was reduced to the greatest distress, insomuch that, having nowhere to lay his head, he sometimes slept in the theatre and behind the scenes. This miserable condition was reported to Wilks the actor, who, on hearing his story, became greatly interested in him, and went himself to Mrs. Brett, as I have said, and represented to her his extreme misery. She, however, denied that he was her son, repeated the story of the death of her child, and refused to acknowledge him. Wilks, however, so won upon her charity, that he obtained from her sixty pounds. It is said that she even promised him one hundred and fifty pounds more, but being engaged in the bubble speculations of that time, soon after lost so much money by the South-Sea scheme, that she pretended it was out of her power to assist him farther. This circumstance has been assumed as a proof of the truth of his story, but I think it affords none ; because, from the gallant address and eloquence of Wilks, sixty pounds might be obtained from a gay and wealthy lady of damaged quality, to relieve a distressed young man, without being any proof of so close a connexion as Savage had represented existed between them.

The friendship of Wilks drew him into more intimate acquaintance

with the other players, and his story being well known among them, and congenial to their romantic imaginations, they treated him with great kindness ; among others, Mrs. Oldfield took a charitable interest in his misfortunes, and was so moved by the tale, that she actually allowed him a pension of fifty pounds a year, which was regularly paid during her life. The character of that accomplished actress might have led the world to suspect that this generosity was not altogether, as Savage represented it, the gratuity of benevolence ; especially as Dr. Johnson admits that his veracity was questioned, and that the only mention Savage has made of her in his works is in praise of her beauty.

By the kindness of Wilks he had sometimes a benefit, and on these occasions he was patronized by some of the nobility, on account of his remarkable story. Dr. Johnson says that the Duke of Dorset told Savage, that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman, and that in his opinion the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without solicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage.

It is surprising that in repeating this story, which the Doctor probably did on the authority of Savage himself, the absurdity of it did not strike him ; the expression ascribed to the Duke rendering it ridiculous to suppose that his Grace would make use of any such expression, in speaking of one who, by the nature of his birth, was precluded from even pretending to rank. Another still less credible story is related of these benefits, no less than that "Savage had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life." The whole style, indeed, of the Doctor's *Life of Savage* is most extraordinary ; it is not easy to conceive how a man of probity, and of the alleged discernment of Dr. Johnson should have written so strongly of things as facts which appear so questionable. In what way, for example, could Mrs. Brett have interfered, otherwise than by representing to her friends that Savage was really not her son, and that in pretending to be so he was an impostor ? and if she believed and knew that her own son was dead, it was natural that she should do so. But in what way could she conceal in this, that she had once had a son, or even attempt it, the fact of her divorce being as notorious as the law itself ? It might be that some believed his story ; indeed, he was possessed of sufficient plausibility to make converts ; but when the ordinary feelings of humanity are outraged by his annotations, it is impossible not to regard him with confirmed suspicion of his being an impostor. Dr. Johnson, in being so strongly an advocate for this loose and licentious person, has departed farther from his own reputation than in any other instance of his life, vehemently as it was occasionally distinguished both for prejudice and vituperation. It is indeed amazing, that, with all the indignation which the Doctor expresses against the imputed unnatural mother of Savage, he never seems to have examined into the truth of the story. It was always, as it would appear, taken upon Savage's own representation—and he,

it is admitted, was a man whose veracity was questioned. But to proceed with his biography.

His attendance at the theatre gave him a better idea of the drama than when he so preciously attempted comedy, and this led him, in the year 1724, to construct a tragedy on the story of Sir Thomas Overbury. The history of this tragedy is in itself calculated to draw tears; for, if we divest ourselves of the suspicion attached to the author's tale of his birth, and consider him only as a man of genius contending with Fortune, there is nothing more truly tragic in the whole compass of poetry and romance. "During a considerable part of the time he was employed upon this performance," says Dr. Johnson, "he was without lodgings, and often without meat, nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the street allowed him. There he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop, beg for a few moments the use of pen and ink, and write down what he had composed upon paper which he had picked up by accident." This is indeed a deplorable description of genius in beggary, but it partakes of the exaggeration which runs through the whole narrative. The sympathy of the reader revolts at the swollen and tumid distress, as inconsistent with the probability of nature. That Savage was during the time in great misery cannot be questioned, and that he may have once or twice begged for pen and ink to write down a speech he had composed in his walk is probable, but that it was a custom of necessity with him during the whole time he was engaged in writing the tragedy, is utterly incredible.

When the tragedy was finished, his acquaintance with the actors was then turned to some account, but it was attended with humiliation; not, however, materially more severe than that which must be endured by every man of genius who ventures to encounter the illiterate phalanx by whom access to the stage is defended against Nature and Taste. The worst that Savage appears to have suffered was from the suggestions of Theophilus Cibber, yet, in the preface to the play, he has commended him for every blooming excellence.

Before the tragedy was deemed ready for representation, among others of whose criticism Savage was desirous of availing himself, was Aaron Hill, who wrote the prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the author's ill-fate with delicacy and tenderness. When at last the play was by all these helps and emendations—the imperfections of the actors, and perhaps the strictures of more competent critics—ready for representation, it was brought out, and Savage himself made his first appearance in the character of Sir Thomas Overbury, but with no *éclat*. Neither his voice, look, nor gesture were such as are expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced, as it is said, to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the lists, when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown to his friends. This pretext of modesty is of a piece with his character. It is much more consistent with human nature, that he should have desired the concealment because he had failed in the part, than that he should have been ashamed of attempting a task which misfortune almost imposed upon him. On the authority

of Dr. Johnson, which in a question of literary taste may be safely relied on, the tragedy of *Sir Thomas Overbury* exhibited gleams and glimmerings of genius, that shone through all the clouds and mists which Theophilus Cibber had spread over it. The profits amounted to about a hundred pounds.

Savage, with all the irregularities of his conduct, had the art, either by his address or wonderful story, to attach to him in every vicissitude many friends, and the friendship of Hill did not terminate with the representation of the play; for when the dramatist was again at his last shift, he encouraged a subscription to a Miscellany of Poems with great zeal, in a periodical paper called "*The Plain Dealer*," written by himself and Mr. Bond. Savage used sarcastically to call them the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote by turns, each six essays, and the character of the work regularly rose in Hill's weeks and fell in Mr. Bond's. Hill published the poet's story, and the more to awaken the public sympathy, he inserted some affecting verses upon the treatment which Savage had received from his mother. But Hill's kindness did not end with mere recommendation—he contributed several pieces of his own to swell the Miscellany. Nor were his kind endeavours happily fruitless. Contributions to the unfortunate author were directed to be left at Button's Coffee-house, and Savage going thither a few days afterwards, found to his surprise seventy guineas, which had been sent for him in consequence of Mr. Hill's pathetic appeal. To the Miscellany, when it was published, Savage wrote a preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty—and to which Dr. Johnson refers for some of the facts on which he grounds the severity of his animadversions on her unnatural disposition. The work was dedicated to the famous Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom Savage flatters with more than the wonted saliva of the literary sycophants of that age.

From this period his reputation began to advance, and he appeared to be gaining on mankind, when his life and fame were both brought into imminent jeopardy. On the 20th of November, 1727, he came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies unmolested, and accidentally meeting two friends, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went with them to a coffee-house, where they sat late drinking. As the house could not accommodate them all with beds, they agreed to ramble about the streets and divert themselves with such casual amusements as fortune should send them. In their ramble, seeing a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing Cross, they went in. Merchant demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which would be immediately empty, as the company in it were then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, and being incensed with wine, rudely rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then boastfully placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. A quarrel ensued; swords were drawn on both sides—for it was then the custom among all persons of gentlemanly appearance to wear swords. In the scuffle a

Mr. James Sinclair was killed ; Savage wounded a maid that attempted to hold him, and with Merchant forced his way out of the house. Alarmed, and in confusion, they knew not where to fly, and in attempting to conceal themselves, one of the company pursued them with some soldiers whom he had called to his assistance, and secured them. Next morning they were carried before three Justices, who committed them to the Gate-house, and in the evening they were removed to Newgate. The affair caused a great stir in the public mind, and when the day of trial came the Court was crowded to an unusual degree. In the examination of the witnesses there was some difference in their respective depositions. But the evidence was, notwithstanding, irresistible. In his defence, Savage occupied more than an hour, during which he was listened to, both by the court and the multitude, with the most attentive and respectful silence. Those, says Dr. Johnson, who thought he ought not to be acquitted, acknowledged that applause could not be refused him ; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now revered his abilities. But Mr. Page, who presided as Judge, exhibited a degree of undignified asperity, such as rarely has disgraced the English bench. "Gentlemen of the Jury," said he, in charging, "you are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man ; a much greater man than I or you, Gentlemen of the Jury ; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I, Gentlemen of the Jury ; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more than you or I, Gentlemen of the Jury ; but, Gentlemen of the Jury, is it not a very hard case, Gentlemen of the Jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, Gentlemen of the Jury ?"

This looks so like caricature, that I suspect it has received some embellishment from the veracious pen of Savage himself, and one might find some ground in it to raise an opinion that Mr. Page was not an entire believer in all the story of the prisoner at the bar. In the end, Savage and one of his companions were found guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, of manslaughter.

The only hope which Savage had now of life was in the mercy of the Crown ; but Queen Caroline, who ruled the Government, was prejudiced against him by, as it was alleged, the influence of his mother ; and yet that Princess was not likely on slight grounds to have been so moved. It seems that when Savage had discovered his birth, or imagined himself the son of Earl Rivers and the Countess of Macclesfield, he was in the practice of walking in the evening before his mother's house ; and one night, seeing the door open, he entered it, and finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up stairs to the drawing-room where she was sitting. His appearance alarmed her, and her cries having summoned the servants to her assistance, she accused him of an intention to murder her. Astonished at her violence, he endeavoured with the most submissive tenderness to soothe her rage, but hearing her utter such an accusation, he prudently retired, and never afterwards attempted to speak to her. In relating this anecdote Dr. Johnson falls again into the same insensibility to the plain import of the facts, which so singularly blemishes his *Life of Savage*, a work which for elegance of dic-



tion has long been esteemed one of the master-pieces of English literature. He goes so far as to insinuate that the calumny of the attempt to murder his mother was related by herself to the Queen ; as if it were probable that, however desirous she might be to get rid of him, she would venture on so improbable a step as to interpose between the law and the royal clemency. I doubt not that the story of his entering the house, and even the accusation of the murderous intention, had been communicated to the Queen as part and parcel of his character, and that her Majesty may have been influenced by it to hesitate in granting him a pardon ; but it seems to me altogether a gratuitous supposition of more wickedness than was necessary, to represent the mother as taking any step to prevent the exercise of the royal mercy.

In consequence of the reluctance which the Queen evinced to pardon this son of crime and disciple of indiscretion, the fate of Savage was considered as sealed ; but the report of his talents and misfortunes happened to reach the Countess of Hertford, who, taking a deep interest in his condition, requested an audience of the Queen, and laid his case, as it was believed by the public, fully before her Majesty. This interposition was so successful that he was admitted to bail, and on the 9th of March, 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with equanimity. The singular circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account, and several thousand copies were in a few weeks dispersed throughout the kingdom ; public compassion was awakened in his favour, and he was enabled, by frequent presents, not only to support himself, but to assist his companion in affliction. Indeed, though the general course of his life is not admissible to much favour, he evinced at times that his heart was not without kind feelings. Some time after his pardon he met in the street a wretched woman who had sworn against him at the trial with a degree of malignity that weakened the force of her testimony ; she informed him that she was in distress, and besought him to relieve her. Instead of repulsing her misery, he changed the only guinea that he had, and divided it equally between them.

Being now at liberty, he was, as before, without any regular support, but dependent on the accidental favours of uncertain patronage, —sources which were sometimes copious, but at others suddenly dry. His life was in consequence spent between extravagance and penury ; what he had, he squandered, because he had no doubt of being abundantly supplied.

By this time his filial affection was exhausted, and he threatened to harass Mrs. Brett with lampoons, unless she consented to purchase an exemption by allowing him a pension. This expedient, says Dr. Johnson, proved successful, merely because Lord Tyrconnel received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred a year. But in what relation did his Lordship stand to Mrs. Brett, and was he not otherwise acquainted with Savage ?—why did he take him into his family ?—and when in

the end he was obliged to discard him, why were his threats against Mrs. Brett then disregarded? The whole of the remarks which the Doctor makes upon this crisis of Savage's adventures is puerile and affected, and betrays a greater partiality for effect than truth.

"This," says the Doctor, "was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life, and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expenses large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage was a proof of discernment; and to be acquainted with him was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius when it is invested with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity and practising their duty."

I have been the more particular in making this extract because it is a fair specimen of the inflation which pervades the work. Dr. Johnson has clearly written it with no very careful reference to the condition of the man. Even with title, rank, and genius, all united, he knew enough of the world to know that Savage could not be the gorgeous character he is here represented to have been. He was but a clever man, the dependent of a Lord, and enriched with a pension of two hundred pounds a-year! It was thoughtless exaggeration; and the Doctor finds himself in the very next page obliged to acknowledge, "that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he praised at another."

I ought not to say, that at the acts of Savage, Dr. Johnson spoke not his just sentiments; I should do injustice to that great man if I did, and appear insensible to his magnificent morality; for even while treating of his intimacy with Pope, Johnson seems to have been fully aware of its baseness. "He was considered," says the Doctor, "as a kind of confederate" with the author of the *Dunciad*, and "was suspected of supplying him with private intelligence and secret incidents; so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a satirist. That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing and wrote another, cannot be denied."

At one time he published a panegyric on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with twenty guineas, and yet he was very far from approving of that Minister, and in conversation mentioned him sometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt. And what excuse did he make for this inconsistency? He alleged that at the time he was dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, an implicit follower of the ministry!

While Mr. Savage resided with Lord Tyrconnel, he composed his poem of *The Wanderer*, a work which displays the possession of considerable talent, and which he dedicated to his Lordship; but they soon after quarrelled, and in that quarrel it must be admitted

that our hero was by his own acknowledgments greatly to blame ; and by the statements of Lord Tyrconnel, unprincipled, audacious beyond all tolerance, selfish, and fraudulent.

After he had been justly turned out of doors by Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote *The Bastard*, which he dedicated "with due reverence" to his mother. But of the story which he told himself of the molestation it occasioned to Mrs. Brett, of which he could have no means of knowing, unless we allow the absurdity that she told it herself, I for one do not believe a single syllable.

Under the name of the Volunteer Laureate he wrote for several successive years a series of adulatory verses to Queen Caroline, for which he annually received fifty pounds ; but the verses were poor and vile, and the allowance he received must be considered not for their merit but in charity for himself. But full of troubles as his life had ever been, and prone as he was to exasperate them, he was not always spared from the scourge of injustice. He was libelled, and in prosecuting the libeller was himself persecuted without cause. And yet it could not be said that he was altogether an object free from suspicion ; for no sooner did he receive his annual fifty pounds from the Queen than he vanished from the sight of all his friends ; at last he appeared penniless as before, but he never confessed into what haunt he had retreated, and it was commonly imagined that he spent his time and money, like other prodigals, "in riotous living."

Whether the story of Mrs. Brett was beginning to be thought better founded than the romantic tale of Savage, or that his conduct was becoming worse as he grew older, is not so much the purpose in view, as the fact, that as his days increased his miseries multiplied, and as a resource, common in that age among literary adventurers, he had recourse to subscriptions for works that he intended to publish, but which he was either obliged to abandon from necessity, or never in sincerity meant to pursue.

His life, unhappy as it may be imagined, was in 1738 embittered with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all hopes of perferment, and he had many reasons to believe that Sir Robert Walpole abandoned him to his fortune. His spirit was, however, unconquered. His poem on her Majesty's death "may be justly ranked," says Dr. Johnson, "among the best pieces that the death of princes has produced."

His distress was now publicly known ; the termination of his pension regarded as a loss—and his friends, to mitigate starvation, agreed to subscribe among them fifty pounds a-year, if he would retire to a cheap place in privacy—one of those plausible arrangements, to which few characters can long submit. He accepted the proposition, but with intentions different from those of his friends. They intended that he should retire to Swansea for life, but he designed only to take the opportunity which their scheme offered, to retreat from the world to prepare a play for the stage, and his other works for the press. "He had," says Dr. Johnson, "planned a scheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from pastorals and songs. He imagined that he should be trans-

ported to scenes of flowery felicity, like those which one poet has reflected to another ; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleasures, of which he suspected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality."

Full of these beautiful fancies, a subscription having been raised, by which the sum of fifty pounds a year was procured for him—equal to the magnificent pension which "a poor player," Mrs. Oldfield, had many years before allowed—he left London in 1739, having taken a tender leave of his friends. But he had not been gone above fourteen days, when they received a letter from him, saying that he was still upon the road and without money ? A remittance was sent to him, but at Bristol he found an embargo upon the shipping, so that he could not proceed to Swansea, and in the mean time he so irritated his friends that many of them cancelled their subscriptions, and in the end he was allowed to proceed to Swansea much dissatisfied with his diminished allowance. He however completed his tragedy ; had recourse to another subscription-scheme for his works, and yet, through a course of distressing difficulties, he preserved his mind in its wonted cheerfulness.

In this state of things his fortunes continued till the 10th of January, 1742-3, when he was arrested at Bristol for a debt of eight pounds. After this event he was removed to Newgate in that city, where the celebrated Beau Nash, of Bath, sent him five pounds. His time in the prison was spent in study, or in receiving visits, but he sometimes descended to lower amusement, and mingled in conversation with the criminals. When he had been six months in prison he received from his friend Pope a letter containing a charge of very atrocious ingratitude. To this charge he protested his innocence, and was evidently disturbed at the accusation. In a few days he became unwell, but his condition was not deemed to be dangerous. The last time the keeper saw him was on the 31st July, 1743, when Savage called him to his bed-side, and said with an uncommon earnestness, "I have something to say to you"—but, after a pause, he moved his hand in a melancholy manner, and finding himself unable to utter what he intended to communicate, said "'Tis gone !"—the keeper soon after left him. My persuasion is that he intended to confess his imposture. Next morning he died, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's, Bristol, at the expense of the keeper.

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## SUSANNA CENTLIVRE.

REALITY often beggars romance in the biography of the players, and the memoirs of this gifted lady, though not distinguished by the occurrence of many events, verifies the opinion. She was the daughter of a Lincolnshire gentleman, Mr. Freeman, who being a zealous Parliamentary man, was, at the time of the Restoration, exposed to such persecution, that his estate was confiscated, and himself obliged to

seek an asylum in Ireland, where some have supposed that, about the year 1680, our heroine was born.

Before she had completed her twelfth year she lost her mother, from whom, as her works abundantly testify, she must have received, even with her innate genius, the elements of an education conducted with no ordinary solicitude and skill. Her father married a second time, but her situation grew so unhappy with her stepmother, that it could not be endured, and in consequence, although almost destitute of money, she resolved to go up to London, conscious of possessing endowments that would help her to fortune.

At this time her father was again residing in England, and it happened in the course of her elopement from his house, that as she was proceeding on her journey alone and on foot, she fell in with the celebrated Anthony Hammond, then a student at the university of Cambridge. Interested by her youth, beauty, and enterprise, he fell instantly in love with her, and prevailed on her to accompany him to Cambridge, where, dressing her in boy's clothes, he introduced her to his companions as a relation who had come to see the colleges.

This single adventure was a suitable prologue to an eccentric life, for it was obviously too extraordinary to last long, as, indeed, the result showed. When their intercourse had lasted some time, they grew tired of their hidden joys, insomuch that Hammond found no difficulty in persuading her to proceed to London; and having furnished her with money, and a letter of recommendation to a gentleman of his acquaintance in town, they parted with protestations of attachment and hopes to meet again.

Whether this story is altogether well founded cannot now be determined, but certain it is that in her sixteenth year she was married to her first husband, a well-born gentleman of the name of Fox; he, however, died in the course of the first twelve months, and with the aid of her wit and beauty she soon solaced her widowhood by a second marriage to an officer in the army of the name of Carrol, who was killed in a duel within a year and a half of their union.

To her second husband she appears to have been sincerely attached, and his loss was lamented as a great affliction; but the straitened circumstances in which he had bequeathed her to the world, roused her latent genius, and animated those talents for literature which have so brilliantly inscribed her name among the most illustrious dramatic writers of England. Alike to divert her melancholy and to improve her scanty means of livelihood, she had recourse to her pen, and published some of her earliest pieces under the name of Carrol. Her first drama was a tragedy, *The Perjured Husband*, but the native bent of her talent soon induced her to shake off the buskin; and among her eighteen plays only one other attempt in that department is found.

When she made her first appearance on the stage seems to be involved in some obscurity, for she never became a distinguished performer, though she undoubtedly possessed an admirable conception of the dramatic art; and it is no doubt owing to this circumstance that the event was so little remarkable. We find, however, that in 1706, while acting in Lee's *Rival Queens* at Windsor, the beam of

her bright eye pierced the heart of Mr. Joseph Centlivre, the principal cook to Queen Anne; soon after he married her, and they lived happily together for seventeen years, during which she enjoyed a friendly intimacy with most of the eminent wits of that period, and was much caressed by the great. Her spirit and beauty were, indeed, highly celebrated; and, notwithstanding the blemish she incurred in the outset of her life, her good sense defended her against the assaults of folly. Like her father, she was uniformly a fervent partisan, and zealously attached to Whig principles, more eagerly so, perhaps, than was comely in her sex. Her comedies evince not only this predilection, but an ardent regard for the Hanoverian family; and it has been said, that though by it she procured some friends, she provoked many adversaries.

On the 1st of December 1723, she died in the house of her husband in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, and her memory was preserved with sentiments of esteem and affection by the numerous friends she had secured by her good-nature, intelligence, and sprightly conversation.

These brief notices comprehend all that has been deemed worthy of being recorded for the information of posterity concerning Mrs. Centlivre; but we can hardly imagine that the knowledge of character and of the ways of the world, which shines through her works, could have been obtained without adventure. In this knowledge she has few superiors; for if in wit she was inferior to her distinguished dramatic predecessor, Mrs. Behn, she was more than her equal in the skill with which she constructed her amusing plots, and the true nature with which she endowed her characters. In terseness of language and brilliancy of wit she has had many rivals, for in these respects she was not eminent; but the success with which her *Bolt Stroke for a Wife*, *The Busy Body*, and, above all, *The Wonder*, still maintain her celebrity on the stage, are proofs how well she had observed the manners of mankind, and penetrated to the cells of the comic echoes in the heart.

## COLLEY CIBBER.

COLLEY CIBBER was born in London on the 6th November 1671. His father was a native of Holstein, and came into England some time before the Restoration. He was a sculptor by profession, and of considerable celebrity. He executed the basso-relievo on the pedestal of the London Monument, and the two figures of Raving and Melancholy Madness, which were formerly over the gates of Bethlehem Hospital. One of these, the statue of Raving Madness, has always been esteemed a work of superior skill and art. His mother was descended of a respectable family of the name of Colley, in Rutlandshire, but which had fallen into decay.

In the year 1682, when little more than ten years of age, he was

sent to the free school of Grantham, in Lincolnshire, where he passed from the lowest form to the uppermost, and acquired all the learning he ever could pretend to. His proficiency, as he acknowledges himself, was not remarkable ; for he was a giddy, negligent boy, full of spirits, with small capacity to do right, and a lively alacrity to do wrong.

It was not, however, so much from any deficiency of talent, that he was not distinguished among his school-fellows, as from his playfulness and indiscretion ; indeed, his thoughtlessness, even at school, exposed him to many mortifications, besides being whipped for inattention to his lessons. On one occasion, a great boy, in some wrangle at play, had insulted him, upon which he gave him a box on the ear ; the blow was soon returned by another which brought him to the ground, when one of his companions, whom he thought a good-natured lad, cried out to his antagonist, " Beat him, beat him soundly." This so amazed Cibber, that he lost the spirit to resist, and burst into tears. When the fray was over, he took his friend aside, and inquired how he came to be so fiercely against him : " Because," replied the boy, " you are always jeering and making a jest of me to every boy in the school." Without intending any harm his wit had secretly provoked the malice of his companion to such a degree that he could not repress his vindictive feelings when an opportunity occurred to indulge them. But he adds : " Many a mischief have I brought upon myself by the same folly in riper life. Whatever reason I had to reproach my companion for declaring against me, I had none to wonder at it, while I was so often hurting him. I deserved his enmity by my not having had sense enough to know that I had hurt him ; and he hated me, because he had not sense enough to know that I never intended to hurt him."

What Colley Cibber observed upon having undesignedly provoked his school friend into an enemy, is a common case in society ; errors of this kind often sour the blood of acquaintance into aversion where it is but little suspected. It is not enough to say that no offence was intended : if the person to whom it is offered has either a wrong head or wants capacity to make the distinction, it may have the same effect as the grossest intention. In reality, if an adversary's parts are too slow to return your wit in kind, it is inhumanity to suppose him to be of a passive nature ; if you find him silent, there can be no excuse for not leaving off. When conscious that an antagonist can give as well as take, then the smarter the hit the more agreeable the parry. A manly character will never be grave on an attack of this kind ; but in the merriment of vulgar people, when the jest begins to swell into earnest, he that has least wit generally gives the first blow. Among the better sort, readiness of wit is not always a sign of intrinsic merit, nor the want of it a reproach to a man of plain sense ; who therefore should never have these liberties taken with him,—ill-nature, I am sure it is, which a generous spirit will always avoid. Wounds given by inconsiderate insults are as dangerous as those given by oppression. There is, besides, a grossness in raillery that is sometimes more painful to the hearers than to the persons engaged in it.

In February 1684-5, King Charles II. died, and, being the only King he had ever seen, he speaks of his death with a degree of regret that can hardly, in these times, be appreciated. "It made," said he, "a strong impression upon me, as it drew tears from the eyes of the multitude, who looked no farther into his merits than I did; but it was then a sort of school doctrine to regard our Monarch as a deity, as, in the former reign, it was to regard him as responsible in this world as well as in the next. But what gave Charles II. this peculiar possession of so many hearts was his affability,—a quality that goes farther with the greater part of mankind than many higher virtues. Even his indolent amusement of playing with his dogs, and feeding his ducks in St. James's Park, made the common people adore him, and overlook in him what in a prince of a different temper they would have otherwise regarded."

The death of the King was an event in the history of the school: the master enjoined the boys, on the form with Cibber, severally to compose a funeral oration for the occasion. This was a task so entirely new, that the other boys heard the proposal, and declined the work, as above their capacity. Of course, his essay was crude and simple enough—the chief topic was the affability of the King, arising out of his recollection of the circumstances alluded to. The oration was produced next morning: all the other boys pleaded their inability; but the master, accepting the excuse rather as a mark of their modesty than of their idleness, only seemed to punish them by setting him at the head of the form—a preferment dearly bought, for he led a most uncomfortable life for many a day among them, being jeered and laughed at by them all, as one who had betrayed the whole form, inasmuch that scarcely one of them would keep his company; and though it procured for him favour from the master, the distinction only provoked their envy, and subjected him to treatment that would have frightened a boy of a meeker spirit. It, however, had not the effect of repressing his emulation, which, strangely enough, he calls stupidity, because he did not affect to be of a lower capacity than he was conscious of possessing.

On the 23rd of April following, being the coronation of the new King, the school petitioned for a holiday, to which the master agreed, provided any of the boys would write an English ode upon the occasion. Cibber proved the author of the ode, which he produced in about half an hour. It was as bad as could reasonably be expected; but it served to get the school a play-day, and to stimulate the vanity of the author; while it so irritated the envy of his school-fellows, that they left him out of the party he had most a mind to be of in that day's recreation. Although Cibber has described these incidents of the boy's world amusingly, still the lesson to the man is impressive. Few have ever acquired any degree of distinction, without observing something of an alienation of heart produced by it among his contemporaries, especially among his early companions.

About the year 1687, Cibber was taken from school to stand at the election of children into Winchester College; and being by his mother's side, a collateral descendant of William of Wykeman, the



founder, his father, who knew as little of the world as artists in general do, imagined that advantage would be security enough for his success, and so sent him thither without recommendation or interest, but only naked merit, and a pompous pedigree in his pocket. Had he tacked a direction to his back, and sent him by the carrier to the mayor of the town, to be chosen member of Parliament there, he might have had just as much chance to have succeeded in the one as the other. But his father bought experience from his failure on this occasion, and afterwards took more care of Colley's brother, in recommending him to the College, by presenting a statue of the founder of his own making. This statue now stands over the school-door, and was so well executed, that it seemed to speak for its kinsman, and did so to good effect; for it was no sooner set up than the door of preferment was opened.

It was about this time that Cibber first imbibed an inclination for the stage, which, however, he durst not reveal; for, besides knowing that it would disoblige his father, he had no conception of any practicable means of making his way to it. He therefore suppressed the bewitching ideas of so sublime a station, and compounded with his ambition, by adopting a lower scheme of getting the nearest way into the immediate life of a gentleman collegiate. At this period his father was engaged at Chatsworth by the then Earl of Devonshire, who was raising that princely place from Gothic to Classic magnificence, and Cibber pressed him by letter not to let him wait another year for an uncertain preferment at Winchester, but give him leave to go at once to the University. This was acceded to; but his father, unwilling to allow him to lie too long idling in London, sent for him down to Chatsworth, to be under his own eye, till he should be at leisure to carry him to Cambridge.

Before setting out on his journey, the nation fell in labour of the Revolution of 1688, the news being then just brought to London that the Prince of Orange had landed in the West. It thus happened that when Cibber came to Nottingham, he found his father in arms there among the forces which the Earl of Devonshire had raised. His father judged the season proper for a stripling to turn himself loose into the bustle of the world, and being too far advanced in years to endure the fatigues of a winter campaign, he entreated the Earl to accept his son in his stead. This was so well received, that his Lordship not only accepted his services, but promised his father that when affairs were settled he would provide for him. "At this crisis," says Cibber, with that vanity which runs through all he ever did or said, "it will be observed that the fate of King James, and of the Prince of Orange, and of myself, were all at once upon the anvil. Who knows," says he, "had I been sent to the University, but by this time that purer fountain might have washed my imperfections into a capacity of writing, instead of plays and annual odes, sermons and pastoral letters?"

He claimed at this period to be considered as one among those desperate thousands who, after a patience sorely tried, took arms under the banner of Necessity. Up to this time, all the incidents which Cibber has recorded of himself have been detailed. How he

came to be one of those desperate thousands, or how his patience was sorely tried, is about as ludicrous a pretention as some of those *ex post facto* apologies of the managers, when a singer has happened to get a slight cold, or a player an invitation to a gentleman's table ; "a bowl complaint," as old Rock of Edinburgh once said to the audience of Cooke, when that spirited player was unable to go through his part. In all the histories of empires, there is no one instance of so bloodless a Revolution as that of England in 1688. The whigs, the tories, princes, prelates, nobles, clergy, common people, and a standing army, were all unanimous. To have seen all England of one mind, is to have lived, as Cibber savagely says, "at a very particular juncture. Happy nation, who are never divided among themselves but when they have least to complain of ?"

The philosophical sagacity of Cibber has always been undervalued. He appears at this time to have had a very correct opinion of the state of the nation ; it accords with our own, which is, that from the time of the Restoration of Charles II. the anti-Stuart faction had lived in the ashes of the Revolution. I have long been of opinion, ever since I studied the details of Charles I.'s reign, that there always existed in England a faction adverse to the Stuart line ; nor do I think it would be a difficult task to show, that in combination with the Puritans and Presbyterians, it was that faction which spirited on the malcontents of Charles I.'s time to the tragedies of his reign.

The contemporary writers of King James II.'s time sufficiently show that there was no lack of freedom of tongue at that period. Though the rod of arbitrary power was always shaking over them, with what freedom and contempt did the people in the open streets talk of his wild measures to make a whole Protestant nation Papists ! and yet, in the height of security, the vulgar had no farther notion of any remedy for this evil than a presumption, that their numbers were too great to be mastered by his mere will and pleasure ; that though he might be too hard for their laws, he would never be able to get the better of their nature ; and that the attempt to drive all England into Popery and slavery was, as Cibber says, "only teaching an old lion to dance."\*

The reflection of Cibber on this state of public affairs is the more remarkable, as it is precisely in sense and tenor, similar to the opinion of the common people during the administration of Cardinal Wolsey in Henry VIII.'s time ; and we are very much disposed to think that his remarks deserve more attention than they have ever received, for we well recollect that, on one occasion, when the late Mr. Whitbread attempted to introduce a Bill into the House of Commons, for the establishment in England of the parish-school system of Scotland, the preamble of which was to the effect, that

\* The lion was a favourite simile of Cibber. Booth used to tell a story of him, that he had introduced into one of his plays this generous beast in some island or country where lions do not grow. Being informed of the mistake, he cried, "Pr'ythee tell me where there is a lion ; for, God's curse, if there be a lion in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, I will not lose my simile."—*Champion*, May 6, 1740.

the peculiar excellences of the Scottish character were owing to their national system of education, Mr. Wyndham, with more philosophical sagacity, showed that the Scottish system was an effect of their national character, and by his ingenious ridicule swept the Bill from the table. I, however, would only refer to Shakespeare's plays, if other proof were none, to demonstrate that the English have always had as good an idea and as firm a grasp of what they conceive to be their privileges as they have had since the Revolution. Liberty, in the English sense—that is, possession of property and security—owes its origin to the natural character of the people, and is not the fruit of any revolution; it is an innate and inherent principle. It may be that revolutions, such as that of 1688, or any other, may have sprung from the influence of this national feeling; but the feeling itself, that is, the resistance to oppression and the condemnation of arbitrary measures, is as natural to the English climate, as the temper of the bull-dog, which prompts both its growl and its bite. In a word, I am of those who cannot discern the great merits of the Revolution of 1688. The only effect it ever produced has been misrule, bloodshed, and all manner of revolutionary crimes in Ireland, consequent on making four-fifths of the wretched and ignorant inhabitants of that portion of the United Kingdom slaves of an inferior caste. The Revolution of 1688 was, no doubt, as compared with other revolutions, bloodless; but it was the parent of great guilt, and it cannot be too soon placed among the errors of nations degrading to human nature. However, all this is in much too tragical a tone for the life of such a person as “a poor player.”

Cibber had not been many days at Nottingham, in the army of the Earl of Devonshire, when the news came that the Prince of Denmark, who was married to King James's daughter Anne, had deserted his father-in-law, and was coming over to the Prince of Orange's party: and that the Princess Anne, justly fearing the indignation of her father at her consort's revolt, had withdrawn herself in the night from London, and was within half a day's journey of Nottingham. In this alarm the Earl of Devonshire's troops scrambled to arms, and having advanced some few miles on the London road, they met the Princess in a coach, attended only by the Lady Churchill, (afterwards the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough,) whom they conducted into Nottingham amidst the acclamations of the people. The same night, all the noblemen and other persons of distinction then in arms with the Earl of Devonshire, had the honour to sup at her Royal Highness's table, which was then furnished, as all her necessary accommodations were, at the charge of his Lordship. In consequence of the noble guests at the table happening to be more in number than attendants out of livery could be found, Cibber, being well known to the Lord Devonshire's family, was requested by his Lordship's *maitre d'hôtel* to attend the Lady Churchill. Being so near the table he gives a most satisfactory account of the conversation which he overheard: it consisted of the important requests, “some wine or water,”—questions equally remarkable for their political wisdom and simplicity.

It appears that our predestined player fell in love on this occasion

with the Lady Churchill, for it would be wrong to recall her to the recollection of the reader with any minor epithet. The account of his feelings is amusing, considering the relative state of the parties, —he the son of a stone-chipper, and she the loftiest lady of the greatest hero and statesman of the time. “The words, ‘some wine and water,’ I remember,” says he, “came distinguished and observed to my ear, because they came from the fair guest whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound all my senses were collected into my eyes, which, during the whole entertainment, wanted no better amusement than of stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding grace of aspect struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not without offence remember it ; since beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and will shine with equal warmth on the peasant and the courtier.”

It would, however, be doing injustice to Cibber, who was not without gentlemanly delicacy, were we to stop here ; for he adds, with something both of correct taste and good feeling ; “I remember, about twenty years after, when the same lady had given the world four of the loveliest daughters that ever were gazed on, even after they were all nobly married, and were become the reigning toasts of every party of pleasure, their still lovely mother had at the same time her votaries, and her health very often took the lead in those involuntary triumphs of beauty. However presumptuous or impertinent these thoughts might have appeared at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret for full fifty years may be now a good round plea for their pardon ? Were I now qualified to say more of this celebrated lady I should conclude it thus,—that she has lived to all appearances a peculiar favourite of Providence ; that few examples can parallel the profusion of blessings which have attended so long a life of felicity. A person so attractive ; a husband so memorably great ; an offspring so beautiful ; a fortune so immense ; and a title which, when royal favour had no higher to bestow, she only could receive from the Author of Nature,—that of a great-grandmother without grey hairs.”

From Nottingham the troops marched to Oxford. Through every town they passed the people came out in some sort of array, with such rusty and rural weapons as they could hastily gather up, with acclamations of welcome and good wishes. After the public tranquillity had been secured by the accession of William and Mary to the throne, the troops were remanded back to Nottingham, where many of the officers received commissions to confirm them in their respective ranks ; and such of the private men as chose to return to their homes were allowed their discharge. Cibber also received his ; for not hearing his name mentioned in any of the new commissions, he thought it time to take leave of ambition, and to seek his fortune in some other field.

From Nottingham he returned to his father at Chatsworth, who thought a little court favour might help to give him a chance for saving the expense of maintaining him at the university. Accord-

ingly, at his suggestion, Cibber drew up a petition in Latin to the Duke of Devonshire, entreating his Grace would be pleased to do something for him ; and the Duke in reply requested him to come to London in the course of the winter, when he would make some provision for him.

Accordingly to London he went ; but it was harder to know what he was really fit for, than to have got him any thing that was not fit for him. However, he commenced his first state of dependence, which lasted about five months ; but in the interval he became wholly enchanted by the stage, and saw no other pleasure in any life but in that of an actor. On the stage alone he conceived there was a happiness preferable to all that courts or camps could offer ; and there, let father and mother take it as they pleased, he was determined to fix his ultimate views. In saying this he frankly acknowledges that he had not much to complain of in the remissness of the Duke of Devonshire ; on the contrary, he freely confesses that he believes his Grace's intentions towards him were only repressed by his own inconsiderate folly, for he was credibly informed by the gentlemen of his Grace's household, that they had heard him in their hearing talk of recommending him to the Secretary of State for the first proper vacancy in his office. The allurements of a theatre, however, were strong in his mind, and he never repented the rashness which threw him on the stage ; on the contrary, he never ceased to think, that were it possible to remove the prejudice which custom has thrown on the profession of an actor, many a well-born younger brother and beauty of low fortune would gladly adorn the stage, rather than pass their lives away unheeded and forgotten.

A considerable part of Mr. Cibber's "Apology for his Life" is occupied with the condition in which he found the stage at the period he first appeared on it : and it must be confessed, that to judge of their merits by the applause of their contemporaries, the actors and actresses of that time were possessed of no ordinary talent ; but, as I shall have to speak of the most distinguished of them separately, I may readily be excused from omitting here the different personages, however meritorious in their profession, who, without the skill and ingenuity of Cibber, would probably have in a great measure been neglected : of himself he has, with his characteristic frankness and familiarity, which do not appear to have been uniformly well understood, acknowledged that he was nearly three quarters of a year before he obtained any regular engagement, and his reception at last was far from being flattering.

He was known only for some time by the name of Master Colley. After waiting a long time for the prompter's notice, he obtained the honour of carrying a message on the stage, in some play, to Betterton : whatever was the cause, he was so terrified that the scene was disconcerted by him. Betterton inquired, in some anger, who the young fellow was that committed the blunder. Downs replied, "Master Colley." "Then forfeit him." "Why, Sir," said the prompter, "he has no salary." "No !" said the old man "why then put him down ten shillings a-week, and forfeit him five." And yet the despised player was destined to attain an eminent rank in

his profession. It is true that he says, "Pay was the least of my concern; the joy, the privilege of every day seeing plays for nothing, were a sufficient consideration for the best of my services."

The first thing that enters into the head of a young player, is that of being a hero; but in this ambition poor Master Colley was snubbed by the insufficiency of his voice, his meagre person, and a dismal, pale complexion. What was most promising to him was the aptness of his ear; for he was soon allowed to speak justly. The first part in which he appeared with any glimpse of success was that of the chaplain, in *The Orphan of Otway*, and in it he received his first applause: his talent on this occasion attracted some degree of attention, and deservedly. Goodman, who had then retired from the stage, said the next day, after looking earnestly at him and clapping him on the shoulder, "If he does not make a good actor, I'll be damned!" The surprise of being so commended by one who had been himself eminent on the stage, was more than Cibber could support—it took away his breath, and fairly drew tears into his eyes: Alexander of Macedon, or Charles of Sweden, at the head of their armies, was not so great nor so proud a man as he felt himself to be at that moment. "But I may give all my juvenile indiscretions to my reader at once." It was madness enough to break from the advice of parents to turn player; but what will be thought of matrimony, which, before he was two-and-twenty, he actually committed—when he had but twenty pounds a-year from his father, and twenty shillings a-week for his theatrical labours? This was not all—he then turned poet too; in which, however, he had a better excuse—necessity: but his dramatic progress chiefly deserves our attention.

The Queen having commanded *The Double Dealer*, Kynaston happened to be unable to take his part of Lord Touchwood. In this exigency, Mr. Congreve, the author, advised the manager to give it to Cibber, if, at so short a warning, he would undertake it. The flattery of being so distinguished by so celebrated an author, and the honour to act before a Queen, made him blind to all difficulties. He accepted the part, was ready in it before he slept, and next day the Queen was present at the performance. After the play Congreve complimented him on his endeavours; assured him that he had exceeded his expectations; and proved as good as his word, for his salary was by his influence from that time augmented; but soon after the actors and managers fell out of sorts, and a house divided against itself verified the ancient proverb. However, the King interposed, and, under his Majesty's patronage, a party of the players, with Betterton at their head, were formed in opposition to the patentees.

It was in the year 1694 that the great war between the potentates of the drama raged with the stormiest fury; but the patentees were not able to take the field till Easter Monday following. On that occasion, Cibber wrote a prologue, for which he received two guineas; its chief advantage, however, consisted in the approbation with which it was received, and the improved light in which it showed him to the town.

In Shakespeare's time the nightly expenses for lights, etc. were but forty-five shillings, and having deducted this charge, the residue was divided into shares (forty in number) between the proprietors and the principal actors. In 1666 the profits arising from acting plays, masques, etc., at the King's Theatre, was divided into twelve shares and three quarters, which produced him about £250 net per annum. In Sir William Davenant's company, from the time their new theatre was opened in Portugal-row, the receipts, after deducting the nightly expenses, were divided into fifteen shares, of which Davenant had ten, and the remainder was divided among the male members of his troop, according to their rank and merit. On the occasion of the great success which attended *Love for Love*, Congreve, besides his profits from this play, was allowed a share, but the amount of it is not now correctly known. These facts, though not of themselves relevant to the history of Colley Cibber, are important to that of the stage, and they have more on that account been preserved than with relation to him.

The quarrel between the players and the patentees was as fatal to the drama as to the unhappy actors : all the honours of the theatre were treated with contempt, and became the spoil of ignorance and self-conceit. Shakspeare was defaced and distorted in every character, insomuch that it was a saying of the time, that Hamlet and Othello lost, in one hour, all their good sense, their dignity and reputation. Nothing could more painfully afflict the judicious spectator than to see with what rude confidence those habits which actors of real merit left behind them, were assumed by the vulgar pretenders who disgraced them ! Cibber only escaped from thus ministering to the corruption of the public taste by being supposed inadequate to fill any of the leading characters. His patient study could not, however, continue long unnoticed ; and an occurrence took place highly illustrative of the vocation of the players, and the great importance of which trivial matters are to little men.

It happened, on a Saturday morning, that the patentees received notice that Betterton's party were to enact *Hamlet* on the Tuesday after. A march was in consequence resolved to be stolen on the enemy, and *Hamlet* was on that night given out to be acted on Monday. The notice of this soon reached the other party, who on hearing it, shortened their first orders, and resolved also to act *Hamlet* on Monday, so that when their Monday's bills came out, the consternation of Cibber's friends was terrible. In this dilemma, the play was again changed ; *The Old Bachelor* was substituted, and Cibber played, for the first time, Alderman Fondlewife, with much applause. It was on this occasion that he first eminently distinguished himself as a player, and from this date gradually rose in his profession.

After his appearance in *The Old Bachelor*, he produced his first comedy, *Love's Last Shift*, which, by the friendly commendations of Southern, was brought upon the stage. In this comedy, Cibber himself played the part of Sir Novelty with so much éclat, that the Lord Chamberlain of the time said it was the best first play that any author, in his memory, had produced ; and that for a young fellow to show himself such an actor and author in one day, was something very

extraordinary. His next part was in Lord Foppingham, in *The Re-lapse* of Sir John Vanbrugh ; and the year following he appeared in *Æsop*, in the comedy of that name, by the same accomplished author. But his triumph in these parts only served to convince him that he was not destined to attain eminence in tragedy ; for although he appeared at different times, with considerable approbation, in the character of Iago, Wolsey, Syphax, Richard the Third, etc., he was conscious that he did not possess a requisite tragedy voice. So strong, —so very nearly indispensable is that one article, voice, in the forming of a good tragedian, that an actor may want any other qualification whatsoever, and yet have a better chance for applause than with all the skill in the world, if his voice is not equal to the part.

It merits notice, however, that in the tragic characters just mentioned, Cibber has been allowed to possess superior talent,—not, however, in the forcible enunciation of what he had to deliver, so much as in the propriety with which he did it ; and he makes an observation which cannot be too often repeated. “These characters,” —he alludes to those just named—“are generally better written, thicker sown with sensible reflections, and come so much nearer to common life and nature than characters of admiration, that I sometimes could not help smiling at those dainty actors that were too squeamish to swallow them.” It is not surely what we act, but how we act the part allotted to us, that speaks our intrinsic worth. In real life, the wise man or the fool, be he prince or peasant, will be equally the fool or the wise man.

The next attempt of Cibber at dramatic composition was *Love in a Riddle*,—an opera got up expressly in imitation of Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*, but it did not succeed.

Besides being an original dramatic author, Colley Cibber had very considerable merit as an adapter of old plays to the taste of his own time. In this he had a strict eye, in many things, to Jeremy Collier’s “View of the Stage,” etc., published about the year 1679 ; at the same time his approbation of that popular writer’s sentiments was not admitted to their full extent ; Sir Richard Steele, especially in No. VIII. of the *Tatler*, has been quoted as affording a more just description of the stage, and yet the truth probably lay between them. Steele recommends the stage as an easy and agreeable method of making a polite and moral gentry, which would end, as he thought, in rendering the rest of the people regular in their conduct, and ambitious of laudable undertakings. “The business of plays,” observes Collier, “is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice ; to show the uncertainty of human greatness, and the unhappy conclusions of violence and injustice ; to expose the singularities of pride ; to repress affectation ; to make falsehood contemptible ; and, in short, to bring infamy and neglect upon every bad thing that deserves their visitations.” In so far it therefore cannot be said that there was any great difference between the principles of Collier and of Steele ; but it could not be maintained that they were both right. They regarded the stage too narrowly ; for, after all that may be said of its moral influence, unquestionably it ought only to be regarded as an amusement. It may teach moral lessons, and inculcate truth by example,



but it does not seem to be legitimately following its natural course when it assumes the character of a moral pulpit, and confines its views only to the teaching of exemplary lessons.

Still, however, Collier's work produced a great impression, and had its due effect, even at Court. Indecencies were no longer regarded as wit; and such was the influence of his exhortation, that by degrees the fair sex came to fill the boxes on the first night of a new comedy without bashfulness and without censure; so strict was the watch which the Master of the Revels, who licenced all plays for the stage, contrived to keep over them. Indeed, he carried his authority in this respect to an extremity that argued but little for a fair conception of his duties, and sometimes exposed him to ridicule and satire: he would strike out whole scenes of an immoral character, though it were shown to be reformed or punished. Still, however, in the end he so far succeeded, that many of those objections which, in the days of Steele and Collier, were justly alleged against the drama, have been removed; and if the stage has since not been improved in vigour, it is undoubtedly no longer objectionable on the score either of unchaste language or uncomely action.

Cibber tells an amusing anecdote of what happened to himself when he presented his version of *King Richard the Third*, as altered from Shakspeare, to receive licence of the Master of the Revels. The whole first act was expunged without sparing a line of it. This extraordinary conduct induced Cibber to apply to him for a speech or two, that the other four acts might limp on with a little less absurdity. No; he had an objection to the whole act, and among other reasons he assigned was, that the distresses of King Henry the Sixth, who is killed by Richard, would put weak people too much in mind of King James, who was then living in France, and whom the nation had banished for his tyranny! This arbitrary folly did not, however, last many years; for by the patent which George I. granted to Sir Richard Steele and his assigns, of which Cibber was one, the patentees were freed from the thralldom of the Master of the Revels, and made sole judges of what plays might be proper for the stage, without submitting them to the approbation of any other person whatever. But it ought to be mentioned that this exemption was soon followed by a new law, by which the power of licensing plays was given to a person duly authorised—a law which occasioned an universal murmur in the nation, and was complained of in the public papers; in all the coffee-houses of London it was treated as unjust, and contrary to the liberties of the people.

When the season came round, and the playhouses were opened, Covent Garden began with three new pieces, which had been approved of by the Lord Chamberlain. The house was crowded; but the best play in the world would not have succeeded that first night. The action was interrupted almost as soon as begun by a cabal who had resolved to overthrow the first effort of this act. The farce in question was damned—the actors were driven from the stage—and happy was it for the author that he did not fall into the hands of the audience. It was at first imagined that the rioters were apprentices, clerks, and mechanics, but it was afterwards ascertained that they

belonged to several grave bodies—that they lived in colleges, and were, in fact, members of the law.

The players were not, however, dismayed ; they stuck up bills for a new piece, and there was the same crowding to the theatre the next night. The author having by judicious flattery tamed this wild audience, the piece was allowed to proceed. It was a farce, in which the French were laughably caricatured ; indeed, to such a degree, and so much in unison with the popular opinion, that the damnation of the piece was forgotten : I believe since that time the law has been allowed to take its course.

In no part of his career was Colley Cibber ever otherwise than an actor of promise. He was at all times esteemed as a clever and judicious performer ; but he never fully realised the expectations of his friends : still he was undoubtedly a person of much merit, and in the “Apology for his Life” he has left behind him one of the most agreeable works in the English language—for, although it abounds in lively gossiping, it is nevertheless a book which contains many able and acute observations, with an air of agreeable trifling : we in vain look for his competitor.

In 1707 he was esteemed by Mr. Rich the patentee, as an actor of some consequence, but rather for his excellence generally, than for any particular distinction ; and in the ensuing year, when Colonel Brett who married the Countess of Macclesfield (the mother of Savage) became one of the patentees of Drury Lane, Cibber joined him. His life, as a player, had even more than the common monotony of a player’s life, and he had, chiefly owing to his good temper, fewer of the petty intrigues which make up so much of its importance and bustle, than are to be met with in the adventures of less eminent men.

In 1711 he became united, as joint patentee, with Collier, Wilks, and Dogget, in the management of Drury Lane ; and, afterwards, in a like partnership with Booth, Wilks, and Sir Richard Steele. During this period, which did not end till 1731, the English stage, in point of performance, attained a pitch of surpassing splendour ; but about that period the principal performers died or retired, and Cibber sold out his part of the patent, and quitted the stage as a business. It could not be said that he entirely retired, for he occasionally played some of his best parts, and was rewarded by being paid fifty guineas per night—the highest salary ever given till that time to any English player. In 1745, though upwards of seventy-four, he appeared as Pandulph, in his own drama, called *Papal Tyranny*, being an alteration of Shakespeare’s *King John*—and which, notwithstanding his great age, he is said to have even then performed with great spirit and preternatural vigour.

It has been supposed, but without warranty from fact, that his promotion to the laurel in 1730, on the death of Mr. Eusden, had a material effect in inducing him to leave the stage ; the result, however, of his occasional appearance afterwards refutes this conjecture : for, by this time, he was well aware that he could not hope to attain greater eminence by continuing, and his fortune was adequate to his wants. After he quitted the stage, he passed the remainder of his

time in ease and good-humour, and died on the 12th of December, 1757, at Islington, where he had recently completed his eighty-sixth year. His end was without pain ; and, considering the difficulties he overcame, the honour he acquired, and, his long, gay, and happy life, he fairly deserves to be quoted as an instance of a felicitous and fortunate adventurer.

The character of Cibber has not always received uniform justice, and especially in his difference with Pope, the poet, who, to uncommon shrewdness, united a spiteful and vindictive nature. He, in fact, kept the laugh constantly against Pope, and preserved, in opposition to his malevolence and spleen, a gaiety and good-humour that was only the more to be envied as it could seldom be disturbed. There was, in fact, at that time two kinds of literary men—those who were properly connected with the stage, and those who trusted more to the press. Cibber and Pope were at the head of the respective parties ; and, in addition to personal rivalry, they had each the rancour of their different sects. It must, however, be admitted that Cibber had always the superiority in temper and cheerfulness ; and that, in both of these enviable qualities, if the poet could occasionally boast of saying the more brilliant witticisms, the player more regularly maintained a joyous and gentlemanly deportment. Few men had more personal friends, and perhaps a greater number of undeserved enemies ; but the malevolence of his adversaries had little effect on his spleen : he seemed, indeed, truly of Sir Harry Wildair's temperament. Nor did it seem within the power of age and infirmity to get the better of that self-satisfied humour which accompanied him throughout life : even in his latter years, when in the midst of a circle of persons much his juniors, through his easy good-nature, liveliness in conversation, and a peculiar happiness he enjoyed in telling a story, he was the very life of the party. Besides these high companionable qualities, he was celebrated for his benevolence and humanity, and by his unwearied charity, showed how truly he possessed a good and tender heart.

I have already described his person, as it is transmitted to us by himself. His chief excellence lay in the walk of fops and feeble old men in comedy ; in the former, he does not appear to have been excelled in any period before him, and not often surpassed since. He has spoken of his merits with great moderation ; and there is good reason to believe that he has too slightly touched his talents as a tragedian. Altogether he passed a long life respectably ; he surmounted many difficulties in the course of it ; and he has added to the stock of our harmless literature so much, that he is fairly entitled to be considered as one of those gentle and gracious spirits which long minister to the mitigation of care.

### THOMAS DOGGET.

THOMAS DOGGET, a native of the Emerald Isle, was born in Castle Street, Dublin, and made his first theatrical attempt in that city.

Not meeting with the encouragement he was conscious of deserving, he came over to England, and joined a company of strollers, with whom, however, he did not remain long, being induced to connect himself with the Drury Lane players, among whom he was universally approved in all the characters he undertook to perform, particularly in the part of Solon in D'Urfey's *Marriage Hater*, in the year 1692 ; in Fondlewife, in *The Old Bachelor*, and Ben, in *Love for Love*, he had no superior : indeed, it is said that Congreve wrote the latter work with a view to his manner of acting.

When the new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields was built, under the auspices of Mr. Betterton, Dogget withdrew from Drury Lane ; but so long as he remained with that party he was esteemed an excellent actor. He continued with them till the removal of the company to the Haymarket, when he returned to assist at Betterton's benefit in April, 1709.

Downs is lavish in his praise of Dogget about this period ; and Steele, in the *Tatler*, No. CXX., terms him the best of comedians. He was, in the general opinion of the world, an original actor ; a close copier of Nature ; and so sensible of what his abilities could effect, that he never ventured upon any part to which they were not well adapted. He is praised for the exactitude with which he dressed his characters, and also in colouring the different degrees of age,—a circumstance which led Sir Godfrey Kneller to tell him one day, that he was a better painter than him. "I," said Sir Godfrey, "can only copy Nature from the originals before me, while you vary them at pleasure, and yet preserve the likeness."

He was a little, lively, smart man ; and there is a portrait of him in the collection of Mr. Mathews, by which, though his countenance appears to have been far from handsome, he seems animated and agreeable. In company, he was modest and cheerful, and his natural intelligence was of a very high order.

He was master of a strolling company for several years, both with celebrity to himself and comfort to them. In a word, he was undoubtedly a respectable but self-willed man, and this peculiarity led him to retire at an early age from the theatre, as will be explained when I come to speak of that event.

Among other whims which he cherished with particular pertinacity, was a belief or affectation that comedy is superior to tragedy ; and in one respect he was right, for undoubtedly it aspires to being nearer nature, and tragedy certainly is allowed to say many fine things that nature never spoke in the same phrases and situations. But though there was some justice and much plausibility in his opinion, his interest taught him that the public had a taste as well as himself, and that taste he generally consulted in preference to his own. It was only where he was thwarted that he was obstinate. He could not, however, look with patience on the costly trains and plumes of tragedy ; and when he found his singularity could no longer oppose the expense, he still refused to retract his opinion, inasmuch that, rather than concede in any way to the more prevalent notion, he at last, in maintenance of his theory, left his old friends, and went over to the other theatre. Considering, however, the

character of the man, perhaps some other cause besides influenced him.

His first part at the Theatre Royal was Lory, in *The Relapse*, an arch valet, after the French cast, pert and familiar. It suited, however, so ill with Dogget's dry humour, that, upon the second day, he desired it might be given to another, and it was transferred accordingly to an actor who did the conception of the author better justice.

Colley Cibber describes Dogget as immovable in his opinion, in whatever he thought was right or wrong, and that he always set up for a theatrical patriot—was turbulent under every description of dramatic government—and so warm in the pursuit of his interest, that he generally ontrun it. He was three times unemployed at any theatre, from being unable to bear, in common with others, those accidents which, among the players, are unavoidable.

But, although Dogget was often a disagreeable companion, yet his obstinacy at times assumed the deportment of virtue. From a severe exactness in his nature, he was often unhappy, especially in situations where irregularity too often prevails; but, in his private affairs, he was always esteemed an uncommonly prudent man. When he returned to act under the patent in Drury Lane, he took unusual care to have his articles binding: having, however, afterwards some reason to think that the patentees did not deal with him as they ought, he quitted the stage and would act no more; but the patentee who, from other people's judgment, knew his value, thought that the sure way would be to solicit his return by the authority of the Lord Chamberlain. An application was accordingly made to his Lordship to bring up Dogget from Norwich, where he then was. The actor, who had money in his pocket and freedom at his heart, was not in the least intimidated by this formidable summons. He obeyed it with particular cheerfulness, and entertained his fellow-traveller, the messenger, all the way with much humour—for he could be often a cheerful companion. Upon his arrival in town, he applied to Lord Chief Justice Holt, and that eminent person took particular notice of the application, for he not only discharged Dogget, but in open court censured the extravagance which had been committed in the process, under the name of the law. The agents, finding that they had not acted with due circumspection, altered their manner, were mollified into milder proceedings, and pacified him in the best way they could.

Although, in this instance, the oppression of authority was not resented by Dogget as such, still the character of the transaction was not changed. With a person of less firmness, it might have been productive of evil, and therefore ought to be considered by its tendency, rather than its effect. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the Lord Chamberlain was not actuated by any malicious enmity: that he conceived his office invested him with the power he exercised, is certain; but, with a jealousy of authority which can never be too wakefully watched, such encroachments should be ever properly, according to law, resisted.

In 1708. Swiny, who was sole director of the Opera, had the Lord

Chamberlain's permission to enter into a private treaty with such of the united actors in Drury Lane as might be thought fit to head a company, under their own management, and be sharers with him in the Haymarket. Dogget was one of the party preferred. Swiny was, however, removed, and Dogget, with those who were joined with him, continued in the management. In this state matters remained with the stage for upwards of twenty years after, with comparatively little other alteration farther than Booth being admitted at the end of that period into a share, and Dogget retiring with indignation.

At that period, while Dogget was in the management, the actors were in the vigour of their capacities, and their prosperity enabled the manager to pay liberally. He was naturally an economist—kept their expenses and accounts in good order, and within well-regulated bounds. In the twenty years, their affairs were so prosperously directed by him, that they never had a creditor who had occasion to come twice for his bill : every Monday morning discharged the concern of all demands, before the managers took a shilling for their own use. Colley Cibber calls it “that firm establishment of the theatre,” and not undeservedly ; for twenty years of a regular and prosperous administration in any branch of human affairs, is more than belongs to the average prudence of a joint management.

In addition to punctuality in their money transactions, chiefly owing to the natural regularity of Dogget's character, a spirit of liberality ran through all their proceedings, alike commendable for its effects, and for the honourable principles of the players. During this golden age of the theatre, the patentees never asked an actor, nor were desired by them, to sign any written agreement whatsoever—at least, Colley Cibber says so, to the best of his recollection. The rate of their respective salaries were only entered on their daily pay-list—which plain record was regarded as ample security. Where an honest meaning is mutual, confidence will be bond enough on both sides. Much, however, must still be allowed to fortune ; for, had their professional endeavours not been successful, such punctuality and free dealing could not have been indulged.

Still, it must be allowed to have been an agreeable state of things ; but it was not always exempt from those cross accidents incident to human affairs. The hazards which the managers ran, and the difficulties they combated, in bringing their system to perfection, were occasionally forgotten. Ease and plenty had, by habitual enjoyment, lost their novelty ; and the amount of salaries seemed rather diminished than increased by the extraordinary gains of the performers. While the actors had sometimes this malcontent mode of thinking, happy was it for the managers that their united interest was inseparably the same, and that their own skill stood so high that, if the whole body of the other performers had deserted them, it would have been easier for the managers to have recruited their ranks, than for the deserters to have found better leaders. In this distinction lay the strength and glory of the stage. The managers being actors, was an advantage to their government, which all former managers, who were only idle gentlemen, wanted.

But, although it must be allowed that, at the period alluded to,

the affairs of the theatre were very admirably conducted, still it is not to be supposed that wiser men might not have done better ; for, as they could not always govern themselves, there were seasons when they were not fit to govern others. It was, however, a happy period ; and both actors and managers were in the possession of prosperity and comparative content. The polite world, too, by their decent attention, their sensible taste, and their generous encouragement of poets and players, saw that the stage was, indeed, capable of becoming, what the judicious of all ages thought it might be—the most rational plan that could be formed to dissipate, with innocence, the cares of life—to allure the ill-inclined from their evil meditations—and to give the leisure hours of business and of virtue instructive recreation.

But to return to the even tenour of our narrative.—One of those occasional little disturbances, that jarred without destroying the harmony of the theatre, will give a better idea of what they were, than any more formal description. It happened that two uncelebrated actors came over from Dublin, and Wilks, with his customary munificence, received them generously, and provided for their immediate appearance on the boards of Drury Lane. But this alacrity roughened Dogget into a storm ; and he looked upon the hospitable haste of Wilks as injustice to himself and Colley Cibber, the other manager—in which, however, Cibber took no part, nor yielded to any spleen. Dogget grew intractable and Cibber was compelled to interfere. He requested Dogget to consider, that he must be as much hurt by the vanity of Wilks's behaviour towards his Irish friends as he could possibly be ; but, after all, though he was a little kind to them, it amounted to no more than letting the town see that the parts the Irish players were shown in, had been better done by those to whom they more properly belonged. This judicious counselling had its due effect, but Dogget did not altogether appear to give into it : he wore still the aspect of uneasiness. “Wilks,” said he, invidiously, “you know, will go any length to make the benefit he has promised his friends a good day, and may whisper the door-keepers to give them the ready money taken, and return the account in such tickets only as the actors have not themselves disposed of.” But we must not investigate too curiously the arcana of the profession, nor think we do justice to human nature by looking too sensitively at the transactions of the players. Money is not the primary motive with all men ; but it is so with many, and was so with Dogget. He, like other men, regarded not the honour of distinction in his profession as the sole reward of his merit, but rather his profession as a means to affluence. Without we carefully bear this in mind, we shall be constantly liable to misconstrue his conduct. He was in all things a respectable, painstaking, money-making man : he would have been so in any capacity of life ; the stage was with him only an easier way to opulence than any other, and his whole habits were formed accordingly.

However, whether it had come to pass that the trick was played which he had suspected, certain it is, that the ready money accounted for by the door-keepers fell ten pounds short of that which the Irish

actors had engaged to pay for their benefit ; and Cibber, in his wish to preserve all things peaceably, paid the ten pounds out of his own pocket. Here it might have been supposed the matter would end, no one, in fact, having any cause to complain save only Cibber ; but it was not so, for Wilks was offended at the interference, and inquired what was meant by doing as Cibber had done. In this, to do only justice to his co-partner, he was frankly and manfully answered, by explaining to him what Dogget had said, and how he (Cibber) pledged his word that the house should not suffer from the benefit allowed to their Irish visitors. On hearing this, instead of being pacified, and properly appreciating the motives by which his co-partner was actuated, he burst into a violent rage, and as men commonly do in that situation, talked a great many absurd things. In the end, however, the business was made up, and no one was the sufferer but Cibber. Dogget, it must be owned, bore these disasters tolerably well ; for, having more money, he had less need of philosophy than his friends.

It does not appear that any particular event deserving of notice occurred in the fortunes of Dogget till *Cato* was brought out, and Booth had, for the elegance of his performance, received the renowned fifty guineas which had been collected for him in the boxes. On that occasion, Dogget suggested to the other managers that they also should make a similar present to Booth. "This," he observed, "would recommend the liberal spirit of the management to the town, and might secure Booth more firmly to their interests,—the skill of the best actor never having received such a reward in one day before."

Some time after, during which there had been a professional excursion to Oxford, Booth solicited to be admitted into the management ; and towards the managers it must be allowed that the Lord Chamberlain acted judiciously, inasmuch as he declined any direct interposition, but left the whole matter to be equitably adjusted by the parties themselves.

Wilks thought, to set a good value upon their stock was the only way of coming to an equivalent ; but Dogget said he had no mind to part with any of his property, and therefore would not set a price upon his interest at all. In the mean time Cibber reminded them, that they only held the licence under which they performed during pleasure, and that Booth, by the style in which he played *Cato*, had won the favour of the Tories, and was then under the special protection of a Secretary of State,—a power with whom it would be imprudent to attempt any contest, with many other arguments to the same effect.

Notwithstanding the good sense, practically speaking, of Cibber's remarks, Dogget would not hear him, but walked up and down, obstinate in his own opinion, and finally declared, that nothing but the law should make him part with his property, and immediately left the room : Booth, nevertheless, was admitted into the co-partnership, while Dogget still continued to demand his one third share of the profits. After many ineffectual endeavours to bring him back, he continued firm in his independence, and appealed to the Vice-



Chamberlain, to whom the adjustment of these theatrical differences was committed ; and he, after hearing the case, adjudicated in Dogget's favour, even though Wilks and Cibber contended that their refractory friend ought not to have withdrawn himself from the performance, and remonstrated on the subject with the Vice-Chamberlain. Dogget, however, without flinching from the resolution he had taken,—being a rich man, and able to stand a brush,—was, in the end, compelled to file a bill in Chancery ; and the result, after two years of litigation, was, that he had fourteen days allowed him to make his election, whether he would return to the stage as usual ; but he declaring, by his counsel, that he would rather quit it, he was decreed six hundred pounds for his share in the property, with fifteen per cent. interest from the date of the new licence, in which the name of Booth was included. By this decree, when he had paid his lawyer's bill, he scarcely got one year's purchase of what he had been offered.

After the lawsuit, Dogget could not endure the sight of Wilks or Cibber, although it was his misfortune to meet with them almost daily, at Button's Coffee-house, so celebrated in the Tatler, and which Addison, Steele, Pope, and other gentlemen of various merits, made their constant rendezvous. But an incident, dramatic in its character, tended at last to reconcile him to Cibber, who had conducted the lawsuit, and was, in consequence, not on speaking terms with him. Their reciprocal silence was often laughed at by their acquaintances, one of whom carried his jesting upon it so far, that when Cibber was at some distance from town, he wrote to him an account of Dogget's death. This afforded Cibber an opportunity of speaking in reply of his merits, which had the effect of softening him to a reconciliation, for the letter was shown to Dogget, and led to what I have mentioned. One day sitting over against him at the same Coffee-house, though they never exchanged a single word, Dogget graciously extended his arm for a pinch of Cibber's snuff, who asked him how he liked it. With a slow hesitation, naturally assisted by his action in taking the snuff, he replied : "Umph ! the best,—umph !—I have tasted a great while."

After a few days of these coy, feminine compliances on his side, they grew into a more conversable temper, and at last Cibber begged him to tell him his real dislike, and the cause of his enmity ; but all he would confess came from him in half sentences and innuendoes. "No," said he, "I have not taken any thing particularly ill, but were others to dispose of my property as they pleased ? If you had stood out as I did, Booth might have paid a better price for it. You were too much afraid of the Court,—but that's all over now. There were other things in the playhouse,—no man of spirit.—In short, to be always provoked by a trifling wasp,—a vain,—shallow—A man would sooner beg his bread than bear it. You can play with a bear or let him alone, but I could not let him lay his paws upon me without being hurt,—you did not feel him as I did ;—and for a man to be cutting of throats upon trifles at any time of day ! If I had been as covetous as he thought me, maybe I might have borne it as well as you ; but I would not be a Lord of the Treasury, if such a temper as Wilks's were to be at the head of it."

Having thus explained the true reason of his quarrel with his brother managers, it only remains to notice his last appearance on the scene. It was for the benefit of Mrs. Porter, in *The Wanton Wife*; and it was commonly supposed that he had himself offered to come forward, as an inducement for the new managers to propose terms to him, but they did not. His appearance was only considered by them in compliment to the lady, and they did not avail themselves of the hint. Still, when he died, they confessed, that, take him for all in all, he was the most diligent, most laborious, and most useful actor seen upon the stage in a long course of years.

By working in the funds, and by frugality in the application of his income, he amassed considerable property at the time of his retirement, with which he enjoyed himself till his death, at Eltham, in Kent, on the 22nd of September 1721. In his political principles he was firm and unbending; and, to mark his veneration for the House of Hanover, he left a waterman's badge and coat to be rowed for on the first of August,—the anniversary of its accession to the throne of these kingdoms. This festival is still continued, and the expense is defrayed by the interest of a certain sum sunk for that purpose. I ought, perhaps, to add, that he possessed some literary taste, but in that respect he was not eminent, and his original education had been neglected.

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## BARTON BOOTH.

It cannot be questioned that Barton Booth was in his day an actor of very considerable merit, but owing to an accidental circumstance he acquired a higher degree of celebrity than he was justly entitled to. Not but that he was at all times actuated by a strenuous desire to excel,—for few men have been more enthusiastic in the pursuit of renown than he was from the beginning of his professional career. There was, however, a degree of mediocrity impressed upon him which set alike at defiance both his natural endowments and the assiduity with which he cultivated them, insomuch that, while he omitted no opportunity by which distinction might be obtained, he rarely reached that eminence which he never failed to seek.

He was descended from an honourable family, anciently settled in the county palatine of Lancaster, and allied to the Earls of Warrington, upon whose barony of De la Mere he is said to have had a contingent claim. He was the third and youngest son of John Booth, Esq., a gentleman of a competent fortune, but which he so much impaired by mismanagement, that he was obliged to leave the country, and to live in Westminster, where he hoped, by interest and application, to have his children provided for. Barton, who was born in 1681, and had just attained his third year at the time of this journey, was sent to Westminster School in 1690, then governed by

the celebrated Dr. Busby, under whom he received the rudiments of his education, afterwards completed by his successor.

He was early distinguished for the liveliness of his genius and the quickness of his fancy ; indeed, he soon evinced so strong a tendency to learning in general, that before he had completed his twelfth year he had attracted the notice of the master by the extent and precocity of his attainments. With Horace, for whom he felt a strong predilection, he was remarkably familiar, and delighted much in the study of the other Latin poets, the finest passages of whose works he with great pains imprinted on his memory. He had, besides, such a peculiar propriety and judicious emphasis in the repetition of them, assisted by so fine a voice and such a natural elegance of action, that he became the admiration of the whole school, and won the particular applause of Dr. Busby, who had himself an early predilection for the stage, in the performance of a part in *The Royal Slave*, a play written by William Cartwright.

In consequence of the superior talent which Booth exhibited in these declamations, when the time came round, according to annual custom, that a Latin play was to be performed, he was selected for the capital part of Pamphilus in the *Andria*, and so powerful was the impression which his efforts produced, that he drew the universal applause of all the spectators ; and he has himself confessed that this circumstance first fired his young breast with theatrical ambition. His father intended him for the pulpit, but he himself so determined to gratify his own inclinations, which were now fixed on the stage, that when he arrived at the age of seventeen, and the time approached when he must be taken from school to be sent to the university, he determined to run any risk rather than enter on a course of life so unsuitable to the vivacity of his disposition. Accordingly, when he was removed from Westminster to Trinity College, Cambridge, he had not been in the university any considerable time, when a strolling company of players came to Cambridge, with whom he was disposed to try his talents. The oftener he visited the playhouse, the more he admired the performance ; and, at length, growing tired at the restraint laid upon the students in colleges, he agreed with the master of the company, and went off with him, without taking notice to any body of his intention.

When the news of this elopement reached London, his mother, whose darling in particular he had always been, was so surprised and grieved, that she fell into a violent fever, which had almost carried her out of the world. His father was also so much astonished that nobody expected he would retain his senses ; the whole family were in the greatest confusion imaginable, and messengers were sent out in all directions, but he had concealed his name, and every inquiry proved abortive.

In the mean while, young Booth so far exceeded his companions in their art, that they began not only to envy him, but took all the means they possibly could to discourage him. The ladies, however, having the ear of the master, turned the invidia of his detractors to his advantage, until at last he became the hero of the company. Wherever they came, the eyes of all were fixed upon the unknown

gentleman, who was everywhere a great favourite, especially with the young ladies, both because he performed the parts of distressed lovers, and was involved himself in some romantic mystery. In this manner the summer passed pleasantly, and much, no doubt, to his satisfaction ; but, alas ! such grasshopping was not destined to last all the year round : while the party were performing at Bury, in Suffolk, an adventure happened which scattered the whole party like chaff before the wind.

One of the players, having a design upon the daughter of a neighbouring justice, persuaded her to accept an invitation to his lodgings on the following evening. Overjoyed with his success, and meeting some of his companions, he went to play hazard with them, when malicious Fortune turned up the dice on the wrong side, so that in a little time all the money he had provided to procure an elegant supper for the lady was lost, and he was driven to his wit's end for the means to entertain her. At last he plucked up courage, and borrowed from his landlady. Miss comes according to her appointment ; is well pleased with her company and supper ; and the landlady is to be well rewarded for her kindness,—believing her lodger would patch up a wedding with the justice's daughter, and that her fortune would wipe off the score. Instead of that, however, the gentleman gives Miss a drop too much ; persuades her to rob her father, and to take a ramble along with him. The silly girl, after a few foolish excuses, came into the proposal ; and her father being from home that evening, immediately put the design into execution ; went home, rifled the old gentleman's strong-box, returned to her spark, and marched off double quick.

Next day the justice missed his daughter, the old woman began to think herself bit by the player, and, between them, they put the whole town in an uproar. The players, in revenge, were banished,—nay, threatened with the house of correction ; and they were all so frightened, that each of them made the best of his own way alone, leaving their stock behind them, and glad to escape so well.

About half a dozen of the scattered actors attempted to perform in the neighbouring villages, till they were reduced so low that Booth resolved to return home ; and being in want of cash and clothes, he came through wet and dry to London, where he was, however, kindly received by his family. Great rejoicings took place on the prodigal's return ; the fatted calf was killed, and all delinquencies forgotten.

But Barton's predilection for the stage was not at all quelled : he hired himself to one Mrs. Mins. and under her tuition acquired great renown at Bartholomew Fair, in consequence of which he was recommended to Drury Lane, for permission to appear at that theatre ; but Betterton declined to grant it, from a fear of offending the noble family to which he was allied. Upon this refusal, he formed some acquaintance with Ashbury, the Dublin manager, then in London looking out for recruits, with whom he formed an engagement, stole away again from his friends, and went over to Ireland a friendless adventurer, in June 1698.

Ambition, whatever shape it assumes, has, in general, some re-

deeming feature ; though, in its noblest form, it may be, after all, but a wild heaping-up of many faculties for the consummation of a single object, like the Egyptian pyramids, whose materials, if widely dispersed, would have constructed much grander monuments of wealth and power than the works in which they appear. Booth, gifted with fine talents, improved by education, and possessed of great personal influence, by forsaking the path that would have easily conducted him to honour, and, devoting all to the illustration of an art held to be ignoble, he forfeited his rank as a gentleman. His talents in his adopted profession were compared "to a god kissing carrion,"—an orb that rolled from its native circuit,

"Swings blind, and blackening in the moonless air."

He made his first appearance on the Dublin stage as Oroonoko, in which he came off with great approbation ; but an odd accident rendered his performance laughable. It being very warm weather, as he waited to go on in the last scene of the play, he inadvertently wiped his face, so that, on entering, he amused the audience by appearing with a pie-bald physiognomy.

Ashbury, a generous-hearted man, and devoted to his profession, was so pleased by his success in the character of Oroonoko, that he made him a present of five guineas,—an opportune donation, for Booth was at the time reduced to his last shilling.

He continued two years with Ashbury, during which he reconciled himself to his friends, and rose to considerable eminence ; but growing dissatisfied with his situation, he returned to England, and, under the auspices of Lord Fitzharding, was introduced to Betterton, who, with great kindness, took him under his care, and augured hopefully of the powers which he was soon enabled to unfold.

Booth made his first appearance about Christmas, 1701, as Maximus, in Lord Rochester's *Valentinian* ; and though associated in this play with Betterton, Verbruggen, and Mrs. Barry, the great stars of that age, his merit was so distinguished, that his reception exceeded his own most sanguine expectations. His schoolfellow Rowe soon after produced his tragedy of *The Ambitious Stepmother*, in which, in the part of Artaban, he established himself as only inferior to Betterton ; and Pyrrhus, in *The Distressed Mother*, was another part in which he shone without a rival.

While Booth was gradually advancing to the pinnacle of his profession, the stage experienced a variety of those vicissitudes to which, while governed by individual caprice, it will always be subjected. There is, perhaps, no situation so arduous, in the whole circle of public amusements, as that of the managers of the metropolitan theatres ; and yet, when we look to the manner in which the office has been generally filled, it would seem to offer one of the easiest chairs in which imbecility has ever reposed. Owing to some of the cabals common in this mimic state, Booth was divided from his venerable preceptor Betterton ; but when the chief actors of Drury-Lane theatre, exhausted by the tyranny of Rich, sought an asylum elsewhere, Booth continued firm to Rich, till a last stroke of severity put an end to the dominion he had so long abused. Accident, how-

ever, sometimes does more for individuals than the force of merit or prudence of design. The stage is so peculiarly exposed to this glorious uncertainty, that many actors have greatness thrust upon them, not only without the slightest desert, but even the remotest expectation. Such was the fate of Booth, who found himself suddenly exalted to a height which, it is true, he had long been qualified to attain, yet, by causes over which no visible agency could exercise its control, he had never reached.

In the year 1712, Mr. Addison produced his *Cato*—an artificial, cold, declamatory work, exhibiting some popular notions of government, and embellished with a few patches of common-place poetry. The public, at this juncture, was rendered combustible by opposite political factions, and *Cato* fired the controversy between them on both sides ; it was caught alike by Whigs and Tories, as exhibiting a test of their constitutional opinions. Booth, as *Cato*, was luckily the prime bearer of the mighty brand which kindled the combustion, and it lighted him the way to thickened honours and redoubled emoluments. The Tory supporters of *Cato*, with a suitable message, sent him a handsome present for the zeal he had displayed in his performance, and the managers evinced their sense also of his merit by making him a similar donation ; while Lord Bolingbroke procured a special order from Queen Anne for his admission into the management, with Wilks, Dogget, and Cibber. It was at this point that Booth attained the apex of his renown, and with this event we close his professional career.

In private life Booth was uxorious and licentious, defects which, however, were almost redeemed by the strictest justice and punctuality in his dealings. In 1704, he married a daughter of Sir William Barkham of Norfolk, who died in 1710, without issue. After her death, he engaged in an amour with Miss Mountford, the daughter of the player of that name, who placed her whole property, amounting to several thousand pounds, in his hands, which, at the dissolution of their intimacy, was most honourably restored, as appears by a deed of release signed by the lady in 1718. The conduct of Booth in the course of this affair and transaction was unworthily traduced ; it was said that he had not only injured the lady in her feelings, but also in her fortune, which, as far as the fortune is concerned, was not true ; and he separated from her on the discovery of her intimacy with another gentleman. She had, in fact, great reason to repent of her infidelity to him ; for her new lover embezzled her money, and even in other respects treated her ill.

About the time he separated from Miss Mountford he began to fix his eyes on a Miss Hester Saintlow, who was at that time celebrated for her beauty, her money and her jewels, and her incontinency, and he afterwards married her,—an event which greatly distressed Miss Mountford, and threw her into a violent fit of despondency, which some say killed her, if she had not been enamoured of a bottle before. However, it is certain she did not long survive his marriage.

He continued to perform his dramatic duties until the year 1727, when, early in the acting season, he was seized with a fever, which lasted six-and-forty days ; and though his health was partially

restored, he never enjoyed his profession again to the extent he had previously taken in it; indeed, he was seized with a great reluctance to appear on any stage, excepting in the run of a play called *The Double Falsehood*, brought on by Mr. Theobald in 1729 and unjustly ascribed to Shakspeare. In this drama he was prevailed on to accept a part, but afterwards gave it up. The part was Julio, and after seven nights performance he finally withdrew from the stage. He then fell into indifferent health, and his mind sank under a complication of diseases. Four years of fatal incurable madness followed, with, however, occasional lucid intervals; on the 9th or 10th of May 1733, he paid the last debt of nature, in the fifty-third year of his age, leaving behind him only a disconsolate widow, who immediately quitted the stage, and who survived him till the 15th of January 1773. To her he left the whole of his fortune, which he candidly acknowledged not to be more than two-thirds of what he had received from her on the day of their marriage.

He is described as having been a well-made man, but of short stature, and yet possessed of an air of great dignity, which is the more remarkable, as, by the description of his physiognomy, it is not easy to conceive that his features could have borne any great expression of majesty. His face was round and red, and his muscles were so large that the emotions of them were perceptible even to the galleries. The passions of rage and grief were those in which he chiefly excelled. Othello and Jaffier were esteemed his two greatest parts; but in Cato and Brutus it was thought he attained a serene sublimity of deportment that could not be surpassed. In comedy his powers were inferior, still in a few characters he was allowed to have exceeded mediocrity. But he was not always uniform, and sometimes forgot himself, especially in personal pride and vanity. After the public courtesy paid to him in *Cato*, he so far neglected his own merit, that on one occasion, a message was sent to him from the boxes, when he was performing Othello, to inquire whether he was playing to please himself or the audience. When he was afflicted with this lunacy he often imagined himself a king or a tyrant, and out-heroded Herod to his servants.—In this state the managers stopped his salary of ten guineas a week; upon which an action was brought against them in Chancery, without success.

As an actor we are, however, bound by the testimony of his contemporaries, to regard him as of a high class; but I have searched in vain to discover in what his pre-eminence consisted, and have been led to conclude that he was greatly inferior to Betterton, and chiefly distinguished for his declamation. He was an author of some things which his professional popularity gave a name to. His character as a writer was not, however, established by any work of importance either in point of bulk or merit: *The Death of Dido*, a masque, is his only dramatic production. Altogether, he seems justly entitled to the epithet of an accomplished man, and appears, after his wild oats were sown, to have been a gentleman in his profession. His character was adorned with many graces, among which a perfect goodness of heart—the basis of every virtue—was conspicuous. He was gay and lively, yet said to have been diffident of his abilities, and to have

been much sought for on account of his other eminent qualities. Although he kept no horses of his own, not one nobleman had more at his command ; and he lived throughout the greater part of his grown-up life on a footing of good equality with the great. To his profession he was considered an ornament ; to mankind a respectable brother ; and his general conduct partook more of those errors which injured himself than did wrong to any other.

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### GEORGE FARQUHAR.

GEORGE FARQUHAR, whose celebrity as a dramatic author has long eclipsed his fame as a player, was the son of a clergyman of Armagh, and was born at Londonderry in 1678, where he received the rudiments of his education, and was thence sent to Trinity College, Dublin, to complete it. The course and modes of study at that university being calculated to make profound rather than polite scholars, did not conciliate the genius of Farquhar, and accordingly he acquired no distinction ; on the contrary, he was regarded by his companions as among the dullest of their fellow-students, and it is said that he was expelled the college, less, however, on account of his incapacity, than an injudicious attempt to turn a solemn and sacred topic into ridicule.

He then engaged himself to Mr. Ashbury, the manager of the theatre, and made his appearance on the stage in the character of Othello, in 1695 ; but he only continued there part of the season, for his histrionic talent was not eminent, and he failed to obtain the approbation of the public. In some respects, however, he possessed several endowments which perhaps justified him in attempting the profession of a player ; for although his voice was thin, and his diffidence excessive, he possessed an excellent memory, a correct manner of speaking, an elegant deportment, and a person sufficiently favourable.

At this period he has been described as an amiable young man, much esteemed by his friends, and indulgently considered by the audience : but an accident, rather than want of success, induced him to retire from the stage. In a scenic combat he happened to take a real sword instead of a foil, and in the encounter wounded his antagonist, although not mortally, in so dangerous a manner, that his recovery was long doubtful. This affair, entirely an accident, affected him very deeply ; he suffered from it painful remorse, indeed, to such a degree, that, as I have said, he quitted the stage, although he was then but seventeen years of age.

In the life of Wilks I have already mentioned that it was upon his suggestion Farquhar came to London, where his ripening talents soon attracted notice, and procured him the patronage of the Earl of Orrery, from whom he received a Lieutenant's commission. It was not, however, as an officer that he was destined to establish his



fame, even although in that capacity he was distinguished by the purity of his general conduct, and his professional bravery on several occasions. Wilks, who knew him well, and was persuaded that he possessed great dramatic talent, never ceased to stimulate him to undertake the composition of a comedy, and at last prevailed on him to attempt one. His first was *Love and a Bottle*, which, though written before he had attained his twentieth year, yet displays such a variety of incident and character, with a sprightly dialogue, and so much knowledge of the world, that it cannot be read without admiration as a wonderful effort for one so young. Wilks's discovery of the bias of Farquhar's genius reflects honour on his sagacity; for the reception which the comedy met with, on account of its own merit, ratified the soundness of his discernment.

In 1700, Farquhar brought out his celebrated comedy of *The Constant Couple, or a Trip to the Jubilee*, in which the performance of Wilks, in the character of Sir Harry Wildair, was esteemed one of the best-conceived and most admirably executed parts ever exhibited in the whole range of the English drama. It has now been many years laid on the shelf, from the inability of any actor to take it up, and for no other reason,—for it is, indeed, imagined and drawn in the finest spirit of comedy; but to perform it, in any degree adequate to the idea of the author requires peculiar endowments, both in person and manners, and a natural gallantry of deportment rarely seen even in gentlemen of the best birth and fortune. It is not, however, my intention to criticise the respective merits of his several pieces; they all exhibited great dramatic power, but were not each received with equal popularity. *Sir Harry Wildair*, or the second part of *The Constant Couple*, should be regarded as having been written in compliance with some wish expressed by the author's friends, in consequence of the triumphant success which had attended the original performance of that exquisite character, for it would appear that the author's taste was averse to the task of repeating it; at least, this much is certain, that it is considered as the most indifferent of his works, though the impetus given by the former production disposed the public to receive it with applause.

*The Inconstant*, which followed, shows unquestionably greater talent, but did not succeed. A change which at that time took place in the public taste, by which the legitimate drama was deserted, and more alien entertainments preferred, has been alleged as the cause of its cold reception; but the inherent deficiency of not possessing any single predominant part affords, in my opinion, a more satisfactory explanation. Of *The Twin Rivals*, in 1703, and *The Stage Coach*, in 1705, I can offer no opinion, having never read either, nor are they regarded as at all so eminent as the two pieces by which they were followed. *The Recruiting Officer*, first exhibited in 1705, is still one of the stock pieces of the stage, and possesses, both in the several parts, and in the respective dialogue of those parts, the most appropriate comic excellence. It has been said that Farquhar, in this particular drama, revelled in pleasantry, so amusingly has he rallied the follies, foibles, and vices, the subjects of his satire,—and that, had he not been an Irishman

and an officer, the liberty he has taken with the characteristics of the army would probably have been resented. Of *The Beaux Stratagem*, his last composition, I have already, in the biography of Wilks, given an account of the origin ; and all my readers have probably enjoyed the vivid and gay spirit which, under the most depressing circumstances composed, sparkles and plays throughout that vigorous though eccentric production.

Tradition has preserved an opinion, that Farquhar has, in his young, gay, and gallant characters, sketched himself ; and it is not improbable he did so, for the same chronicler reports that he was wild, witty, and humoursome, blest with talent, and adorned with the highest feelings of honour and courage. Besides contributing so many excellent dramatic compositions to the stage, he has the merit of adding Mrs. Oldfield to its ornaments. In the life of that distinguished actress I have already mentioned the incident by which she became known to him, and the motive which has been alleged as one of the causes, besides her ability, which induced him to urge her to a profession for which she was endowed with high qualifications and a predilection so strong as to make them genius.

But whatever the admiration may have been which attached him to this lady, it does not appear to have interfered with his ordinary pursuits, for in 1703 he was married to another, and, as he was led to believe, one possessed of considerable fortune. In this, however, he was deceived ; but his conduct after making the mortifying discovery was becoming the gentlemanly generosity of his character. Perhaps, however, as the deception on the part of the lady can merit no lighter epithet than a deliberate fraud, the world will ever think that he assented more than he ought to have done to the injury of which he was the victim, by continuing to treat such a delinquent with kindness. Had he married her entirely from mercenary motives, his treatment of her would have been no more than just ; but when it is considered that he was deliberately inveigled into her snares, it must be allowed that his conduct exceeded what was to be expected from common humanity.

The lady had no fortune whatever, but had fallen in love with the man, and knowing that he was volatile, thought he was not likely to be drawn into matrimony without the bait of some considerable advantage ; she accordingly contrived to make the public suppose her possessed of a large fortune, and to find means of letting Farquhar hear of her regard. Vanity was thus brought into co-operation with interest, and they were in consequence married. But whatever judgment the public pronounces on her, his conduct after the discovery was such as only could have been expected from the romance of a player's nature, and the high tone of his own sentiments. He never once upbraided her for the imposition, but regarded it as a trick dictated by the ingenuity of love, treated her with all the tenderness of the most delicate husband.

Mrs. Farquhar did not, however, long enjoy the happiness which she had purchased at such a sacrifice of honour, for the consequences of this imprudent union may be easily traced as the means which tended to abridge his life. Involved in debt by the expenses

of an increasing family, he solicited the patronage of the Duke of Ormond, who advised him to sell the commission he had received from the Earl of Orrery, and promised him a captaincy of dragoons. The expedient which this suggestion offered he unfortunately adopted, and with the proceeds paid his debts ; but the Duke neglected his promise. The disappointment preyed upon the mind of poor Farquhar, and hastened his end. The friendship of Wilks was in this crisis exerted for his advantage, and by his cheering he was induced to undertake the composition of *The Beaux Stratagem* ; but Death stood in derision at his elbow, and only spared him till he had finished his task. He died in April 1707, before he had completed half the run of his natural course, being then scarcely thirty years of age.

During the rehearsal of *The Beaux Stratagem*, written under such circumstances, though his fatal hour was felt to be coming, his felicitous gaiety was never dimmed. He even sported with his suffering. For one day, when Wilks, who often then visited him, said that Mrs. Oldfield thought he had dealt in the piece too freely with the character of Mrs. Sullen, in giving her to Archer without a proper divorce, he replied, with his wonted playfulness,

“I will, if she pleases, solve that immediately by getting a real divorce, marrying her myself, and giving her my bond that she shall be a real widow in less than a fortnight.”

But with all that seeming disregard of his peril and inevitable doom, the anguished feeling of the anxious parent was bleeding in his heart. Among his papers, after his death, Wilks found the following touching note addressed to himself :—

“DEAR BOB,

“I have not any thing to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls ; look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was, to the last moment of his life, thine,

GEORGE FARQUHAR.”

This appeal to Wilks was not in vain, and was regarded with the tenderness and generosity of his character ; he kindly showed to the orphans all proper attention, and when they became fit to be put out into the world, he procured a benefit for them from the theatre. Nevertheless, the fate of Farquhar's family was melancholy. His wife died in the utmost indigence, one of the daughters married a low tradesman, and the other was living in 1764 in great poverty, but happily her mind found her situation almost congenial, for she had no pleasure or pride in the celebrity of her father, and was in every respect fitted to her humble condition.

The following character of Farquhar, written by himself, addressed to a lady, though imbued with the lively spirit that scintillates in his comedies, has something in it that I have often thought, in connexion with his fate, extremely pathetic.

“My outside,” says he, “is neither better nor worse than my Creator made it ; and the piece being drawn by so great an artist, it were presumption to say there were many strokes amiss. I have a body qualified to answer all the ends of its creation, and that is sufficient.

“As to the mind, which in most men wears as many changes as their body, so in me it is generally dressed like my person, in black. Melancholy is its every-day apparel, and it has hitherto found few holidays to make it change its clothes. In short, my constitution is very splenetie and yet very amorous; both which I endeavour to hide, lest the former should offend others, and the latter incommode myself. And my reason is so vigilant in restraining these two failings, that I am taken for an easy-natured man with my own sex, and an ill-natured clown by yours.

“I have very little estate but what lies under the circumference of my hat; and should I by mischance come to lose my head, I should not be worth a groat; but I ought to thank Providence that I can by three hours’ study live one-and-twenty with satisfaction to myself, and contribute to the maintenance of more families than some who have thousands a-year.

“I have something in my outward behaviour which gives strangers a worse opinion of me than I deserve; but I am more than recompensed by the opinion of my acquaintance, which is as much above my desert.

“I have many acquaintance, very few intimates, but no friend,—I mean in the old romantic way; I have no secret so weighty but what I can bear in my own breast; nor any duels to fight but what I may engage in without a second; nor can I love after the old romantic discipline. I would have my passion, if not led, yet at least waited on by my reason; and the greatest proof of my affection that a lady must expect is this,—I would run any hazard to make us both happy, but would not for any transitory pleasure make either of us miserable.

“If ever, Madam, you come to know the life of this piece, as well as he that drew it, you will conclude that I need not subscribe the name to the picture.”

To this vivid sketch, it only remains for me to say a few words respecting his genius.

As a player, his merits were obviously of an ordinary stamp, for although he left the stage in early life, he does not appear to have felt within himself the consciousness that he was able to excel. He was one of those men of genius, who deserve the epithet of bright, rather than splendid. In the choice of his subjects, the sprightliness of his dialogue, and the life of his characters, his contemporaries appeared, by their reception of his works, to have thought him highly estimable, but posterity objects to the licentiousness of some of his scenes, a fault he inherited from the taste of his age; still the reader that considers his youth, talents, and misfortunes, will sigh over the memory of one who has extended the scope of jocund pleasures.

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### JAMES QUIN.

It deserves to be particularly remarked, that although few men live more in conversation than Quin, there is no good life of him extant.

The only one deserving of the name of a biographical picture, is the anonymous publication of 1766, and that is in so many respects defective, that it is totally unworthy of its professed object. It has been said that it was written by Goldsmith; but it is unlike any work by him both in style and general talent. This fact will serve to excuse some of the faults of the present undertaking; the writer has really felt himself obliged to compile a new work from very heterogeneous materials.

It is commonly supposed that this great actor and able wit was a native of Ireland, but my inquiries have ascertained that he was born in King-Street, Covent-Garden, London, on the 24th of February 1693, and that his ancestors were of an ancient English family. Some time before his birth, his father had been settled in Dublin. His grandfather, Mark Quin, was Lord Mayor of that city in 1676.

The father of our hero received a gentlemanly education in Trinity College, Dublin; thence he came over to Lincoln's-inn, and was called to the bar. At the death of the Alderman he returned with his infant son to Ireland, to take possession of his fortune, which in those days was deemed highly respectable.

Quin, in due time, was educated under the care of Dr. Jones, of Dublin, a teacher celebrated for his learning; and he continued with him until the death of his father, in 1710, at which time he was not able to prove his legitimacy, nor is any account of his mother now to be met with.

While his father lived, Quin was destined for the bar, and about the age of twenty he came over to London to study jurisprudence more perfectly than at that time he was expected to be able to do in Dublin. For this purpose he took chambers in the Temple, and studied Coke upon Littleton, with the usual success of young men who little regarded either; in fact, he ran into a life of gaiety, and Shakespeare was preferred to the Statutes at large.

When his father died, he found that means were wanting for his support, and that circumstance induced him to think of those talents which he had received from Nature. His good sense told him that he had made no comparative progress in the law, and that the stage was his only alternative. He saw, indeed, that merit was not enough to ensure success to a counsellor, and that without the patronage of friends, talent is at the outset but a sorry help. Quin had only talent; and he became, in the true sense of the term, a mere adventurer.

He had many of the requisites to form a good actor—an expressive countenance, an inquisitive eye, a clear voice, full and melodious—an extensive memory, a majestic figure, and, above all, an enthusiastic admiration of Shakspeare. He had moreover associated with the principal actors of the time, and it was to Ryan that he first communicated his intention of coming upon the stage, by whom, it is said, he was first introduced to the managers of Drury-Lane, who engaged him, in August 1717, to appear in the course of the following winter.

Nothing can be opposed to this statement, nor am I enabled to

contradict the apocryphal report of his having first appeared on the stage in Old Snock Alley Theatre, Dublin, as Abel in *The Committee*, and that he was advised to leave that house and come to London.

It has been observed, that there is some sort of seeming hardship imposed on a young actor, on his first entrance into an established company, by the parts being all previously engaged, and that preferment must in consequence be waited for, and be slow. The observation is only in part true as applied to Quin, although when he made his first appearance, and up till the period when Garrick showed the absurdity of the rule, it was an etiquette in the profession, that seniority should be considered with as much jealousy in the Green-Room, as in the War-office, or the Admiralty. A performer would have been looked upon by his competitors as little better than an usurper, who ventured to violate this decorum.

While Quin was employed in studying those parts in which he imagined he might appear in the ensuing season, he was unexpectedly obliged to leave London. In his youthful years he laid no claim to any peculiar purity in his conduct, and formed, what he supposed, a very snug alliance with a woollen-draper's wife. One night he met the lady by accident, and persuaded her to accompany him to a tavern, and she could not resist his persuasion. But a stupid waiter showed negligently into the same room a vestal, in company with the husband of the lady. Swords were drawn—the ladies screamed and a battle ensued. A crim. con. and an assault and battery, were both instituted, and our hero fled to Dublin. The husband, however, died soon after, and Quin was invited to return. It was during this evasion, that I am of opinion he made his appearance as Abel, in Snock-Alley.

After his return to the English stage, Quin, according to the custom of that period, remained some time in the condition of a faggot, as the novice performers were at that time called, till an order came from the Lord Chamberlain to revive the tragedy of *Tamerlane*. It was got up with great magnificence. It happened, however, that on the third night, the actor who performed Bajazet was taken ill, and Quin was persuaded to read the part. In this he succeeded so well, that the audience gave him the greatest applause. The next night he had made himself perfect in the part, and performed with redoubled approbation; but the theatrical world is a miniature of the real; actors of twice his age thought his progress too rapid.

It was not, however, till the year 1720, that he had any opportunity of displaying his great theatrical endowments. In that season *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was revived, and there was no one of the whole company who would undertake the part of Falstaff. Rich, the manager, was therefore inclined to give up the representation after it had been prepared, when Quin happening to come in his way, offered to attempt it.

"Hem!" said Rich, taking a pinch of snuff, "you attempt Falstaff—why you might as well think of acting Cato after Booth! The character of Falstaff, young man, is quite another character from what you think, (and taking another pinch of snuff,) it is not a little snivelling part that—that—in short any one can do. There is not

a man among you that has any idea of the part but myself. It is quite out of your walk. No, never think of Falstaff—it is quite out of your walk, indeed, young man.”

Quin, however, took the part, and in his possession it became one of the ornaments of the English stage. Rich, however, had only spoken like the rest of the world. It is a vulgar error to suppose that artists are the best judges of the professional merits of each other. They may be, and commonly are, the best judges of the manipulation of their profession ; but there is no reason in experience that they should go farther. The opinion of an audience should, in cases similar to this, be always preferred to that of an individual. Artists can be in their profession no better judges, than they are themselves excellent ; but an audience, which is miscellaneous, will probably be always better, because each of those composing it has a higher unknown standard than his own experience.

The next year, 1721, of Quin's performance, is remarkable in dramatic history, as the first in which soldiers appeared as guards in the theatre : an useless pageant, an event which may be ascribed to the occasional want of common sense, for which the English Government has been of old distinguished. Before that season, the theatres had only been guarded by civil constables. A riot arising in that of Lincoln's Inn Fields, gave an occasion for the military power to be added to the civil, for the protection of the audience and the players from insult. The occasion was this :

A certain noble Earl, whether Scotch or Irish, the record does not say, much addicted to the wholesome and inspiring beverage of whiskey, was behind the scenes, and seeing one of his friends on the other side among the performers, crossed the stage ; of course, was hissed by the audience. Rich, who was on the side that the noble Earl came to, was so provoked, that he told his Lordship “not to be surprised if he was not allowed again to enter.” The drunken Peer struck Mr. Rich a slap on the cheek, which was immediately returned, and his Lordship's face being round, and fat, and sleek, resounded with the smack of the blow ; a battle royal ensued, the players on the one side, and that part of the aristocracy then behind the scenes on the other. In the end, the players being strongest, either in number or valour, thrashed the gentlemen, and turned them all out into the street, where they drew their swords, stormed the boxes, broke the sconces, cut the hangings, and made a wonderful riot, just as foolish sprigs of quality presume even yet to do. Quin came round with a constable and watchmen from the stage, charged the rioters, and they were all taken into custody, and carried in a body before Justice Hungerford, who then lived in the neighbourhood, and were bound by him over to answer the consequences—they were soon, however, persuaded by their wiser friends to make up the matter, and the manager got ample redress. The King, on hearing of the affair, was indignant, and ordered a guard to attend the theatres, and there it mightily stands ever since, a warning monument of a Lord drinking too much whiskey.

We must not suppose that the appearance of the military at the theatre was a voluntary act of the sovereign, although it

was, in political parlance, ascribed to him ; in point of fact, it was not only the opinion of the managers, but of others, that the military at the play-houses would give an air of consequence to the performance, and suppress all future disturbances—they forgot to ascertain how far the soldiers had the power to act. A great controversy, in consequence of this innovation, arose among the people, and John Bull evinced his wonted sagacity. Some thought it would have the effect of dragooning the town into the approbation of a new piece, or a new actor ; and others, that the slightest indication on the part of the managers to direct the soldiers to act, would be worse for themselves than the tearing up of all the benches in the pit and gallery ; and in reality it has so happened ; the military are like those idols dumb which blinded nations stand in awe of. They have weapons in their hands, but they dare not use them ; and of this at the time the theatres were duly apprised by the Government. Still they persevere in maintaining this foolish pageantry, so much at variance with the genius of the people, even though, from the beginning, the soldiers at the playhouses have in all rows and riots been objects of derision and contempt.

The first battle was much like the last. It was on the production of a new pantomime. In it a Madame Chateaufort, a dancer, was to perform, but being taken ill the piece was suspended. The audience endured the disappointment in silent patience ; the second night they only hissed, but on the third the storm arose. They handed out the ladies, and then began to demolish the interior of the house. A noble Marquis opened the war by proposing, as the shortest way of making all things clear, to set it on fire, but his Lordship was overruled, so they, in their tender mercy, only broke the harpsichord and bass-voles of the orchestra, the looking-glasses, sconces, and chandeliers ; pulled up the benches in the pit ; broke down the boxes and the royal arms, and some such trifling mischief as nearly ruined the whole concern. The noble peer who so distinguished himself by proposing to burn the theatre, relented, however, the next day, and sent the managers a hundred pound note for his share in the amusement. On this occasion the soldiers stood at their posts magnificently idle.

The next theatrical fight was more national and patriotic. The proprietors of the little theatre in the Haymarket, having imagined that French comedies would amuse the town, brought over a party of Parisians, and most atrociously introduced them on the stage. Every true-born Englishman felt the insult, and manfully resolved to avenge it. The curtain drew up, and each actor appeared with his guard, but the audience, not intimidated, were determined to stop the performance, and accordingly began with cat-calls, then a volley of pippins, and thirdly, a direful discharge of eggs. The proprietors lost their senses, more especially when they found the soldiers stood still ; and wringing their hands, and quaking with fear, slunk behind the scenes, where, as a last resource against the whirlwind, they sent for a justice to read the riot-act, but when he came, instead of taking orders from them, he sent both troops and actors tramping off the stage. The warriors and heroes of the buskin being thus dis-



posed of, John Bull thought it then high time to give the proprietors a taste of his power in punishment, so he demolished the house. The Ambassadors of France and Spain being present, he would not let them escape till they had witnessed his suavity, and accordingly he cut the traces of their carriages, and obliged them to sit out the performance of his prank.

The contagion spread from the Haymarket to Drury Lane, and furnished Quin with an opportunity of showing the audience his self-possession and address. In the midst of a riot one night, when the play could not begin till some of the royal family, who had sent notice of their intention to be there, had come, he appeased a crowded and enraged audience by telling them one of his happiest stories.

Quin, indeed, never on any occasion lost his self-command. It is related of him that there was a riot once at the stage-door, when he wounded slightly in the hand a young fellow who had drawn upon him. The spark presently after came into one of the boxes over the stage-door. The play was *Macbeth*, and in the soliloquy where he sees the dagger, as Quin repeated,

“And on thy blade are drops of reeking blood,” \*

the young gentleman bawled out—“Ay, reeking indeed—It is my blood.” The actor gave him a severe side-look, and replied, loud enough to be heard, “D—n your blood!” and then went on with the speech.

Not long after this affair a circumstance occurred painful to repeat. Notwithstanding the rough fantastic manner which Quin often delighted to assume, no man was of a more humane disposition, or less addicted to revenge, at the same time he would not tamely, in any way, submit to an insult. It happened that at this period there was a Mr. Williams, a native of Wales, on the stage of Drury Lane, who performed the part of the messenger in the tragedy of *Cato*, and in saying “Cæsar sends health to Cato,” Quin was so amused at the manner in which he pronounced the last word—“Keeto,” that he replied with his usual coolness, “Would he had sent a better messenger!” a retort which so stung Williams, that he vowed revenge, and followed him when he came off into the green-room, where, after representing the professional injury in making him ridiculous before the audience, he challenged Quin to give him the redress of a gentleman. Quin, with his wonted philosophy and humour, endeavoured to rally him, but it only added fuel to the rage of Williams, who, without farther remonstrance, retired and waited for him under the piazza, where he drew. In the scuffle Williams was killed. Quin was tried for the murder at the Old Bailey, and a verdict brought in against him of manslaughter, which at the time was applauded as just and most equitable.

In the year 1731, Quin was considered to have attained the meridian of his profession; all the great actors had died or had

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\* In those days they were less careful in giving the text than now, and the antiquities of the language were less understood; this accounts for the error here.

retired, and he had no competitor. His merit, however, was not allowed to him until he performed *Cato*. In undertaking the part he showed great good taste ; instead of having his name in the bills in the ordinary form, he paid a just compliment to the town and the merits of his predecessor, by having it stated that “ the part of *Cato* would be only attempted by Mr. *Quin*.” The propriety of this invitation was duly appreciated—a full house was the consequence, and the actor did not disappoint it. When he said, speaking of his son, “ Thanks to the Gods—my boy has done his duty,” the whole house was so affected, that there was a universal shout of “ Booth outdone.” Yet this was not all, he was encored in the famous soliloquy ; and tradition still continues to repeat, that the character of *Cato*, as represented by this judicious actor, was one of the finest parts ever represented on any stage.

For ten years, *Quin* continued at the head of his profession, unrivalled—but the empire of the stage was not in all that time equally prosperous and in peace. The tyranny of the managers of *Drury Lane*, to whom the shares of *Booth* and *Colley Cibber* had been sold, was so great, that the whole company rebelled, and attempted to form an independent state in the *Haymarket*. After various plots and conspiracies, the war ended, as far as *Quin* was concerned, in his becoming engaged by *Fleetwood*, who was the purchaser of the shares. It was on this occasion that *Theophilus Cibber*, having indulged his fancy farther than truth, some opprobrious words passed between him and *Quin*, who evinced his contempt for *Theophilus* in the strongest and foulest expressions that the language could furnish :—enmity on *Cibber*’s part continued, in consequence, to ferment until, as shall be duly reported, they came to a duel. In the mean time, *Quin* was appointed in *Theophilus*’s place to read the new plays, and one of the stories related of the manner he exercised this vocation deserves to be repeated.

A poor poet had placed a tragedy in his hands one night behind the scenes, whilst he was still dressed for the character he had performed. *Quin* put the manuscript into his pocket and forgot it. The bard having allowed some time to elapse, sufficient for the reading of the piece, called one morning to know what was its doom. *Quin* gave some invented reasons for its not being proper for the stage ; the author requested it might be given back to him,—“ There,” said *Quin*, “ it lies in the window.” But *Bayes*, on going to take it up, found a comedy, and his was a most direful tragedy—“ Well, then,” says the actor, “ if that be not it, faith, Sir, I have certainly lost your play.”—“ Lost my play !” cried the astonished bard—“ Yes, by G—d ! but I have : look ye, however, here is a drawer full of both comedies and tragedies, take any two you please in the room of it.”

This was certainly treating the affair coolly enough, but the poet in the end was pacified, by having the run of the house, and his next piece was accepted, which, it is said, was no other than a rough copy of the one which had been so scurvily treated.

But although the humour of *Quin* was on all occasions to assume this gruff and cool manner, it was ever accompanied with some indi-

cation of the native warmth and gentleness of his heart, which greatly softened all apparent acerbity, and even often pleased those that his words and style were calculated to offend. This appears nowhere so effective as in his transactions with the celebrated George Anne Bellamy, whose Apology, unfortunately, can scarcely be regarded as entitled to full credit, for she herself acknowledges, that being written from recollection, it was not always correct, and it is now pretty well ascertained that it was not her own production, but dictated to another. His conduct towards Miss Bellamy is almost now the only evidence remaining that he was not always that wit, actor, and eater which he is commonly represented to have been. His paternal kindness towards that lady had in it many amiable traits, and helps in some degree to give us an idea nearer to his worth than either the sayings or doings attributed to him.

She was introduced to him by Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, where he was playing, or rather ruling, with a rod of iron. He then thought her too young for the stage, and on that account cherished a distaste of her; but when she came out and displayed the powers she possessed, he generously suppressed his prejudices, and continued through life to treat her with more than common friendship. One day, while she was yet but only attracting the public attention, he desired to speak with her after the rehearsal, and on entering his dressing-room, he took her by the hand, and said with that benignity which few could assume better—"My dear girl you are very vastly followed, I hear. Do not let the love of finery, or any other inducement, prevail upon you to commit an indiscretion. Men in general are rascals—you are young and engaging, and therefore ought to be doubly cautious. If you want any thing in my power that money can purchase, come to me and say, James Quin, give me such a thing, and my purse shall be always at your service"—And his eyes glistened with the fond tear with which this fatherly admonition was delivered.

In addition to this partiality for this young lady, who in the days of her gaiety and innocence was one of the most fascinating creatures of the period, Quin always was respected by keeping the best company, and conducting himself in a gentlemanly manner. He not only often associated with men of high rank but of great talents, and was less regarded as a distinguished player than as a man of the most companionable qualities. He numbered among the friends of his old age some of the highest names in the catalogue of the literary stars of the time, and was always eminent for the excellence with which he entertained them.

His affection to Thomson the poet has often been mentioned, but the manner in which he evinced it, both during the poet's life and after his death, will ever be noticed with commendation. He delivered the prologue to Thomson's *Coriolanus*, written by Lord Lyttelton, and it has always been commemorated as one of the tenderest exhibitions that ever the stage displayed.—It was on the performance of this tragedy that he, owing to his pronunciation being of the old school, amused some of the audience by an inadvertent mistake. In the scene where the Roman ladies come in procession

to solicit Coriolanus to return to Rome, they are attended by the tribunes. The centurions of the Volscian army bearing *fascēs*, their ensigns of authority, they are ordered by the hero to lower them, as a token of respect. But the men who performed the centurions, imagining through Quin's mode of pronunciation, that he said *fases*, all bowed their heads—fortunately this ludicrous affair was in the rehearsal, and not before an audience.

We now advance to that period when the whole style of acting was to undergo a change, and when the merits of Quin were destined to suffer an eclipse.

He was at the head of the Drury Lane company, when Garrick made his appearance in the character of Richard the Third, at Goodman's Fields. But he was the only actor that could be opposed to him in any particular character. It was soon, however, manifest that Garrick's universality would not allow of any rival; at the same time, although his general superiority was at once conceded, it was still maintained that Quin, in the parts of Sir John Brute, Sir John Falstaff, and in Cato, was still above all praise, and even in the opinion of many, he was still the superior of Garrick in every tragic character;\* but this was a factious opinion, for save in the three parts enumerated, in every other Garrick was the greatest performer. Quin himself saw that in striking out a more natural style, and with greater natural endowments, Garrick was destined to attain an eminence in the profession which had not before been reached. But still he for a long time adhered to his own peculiar old style, till the taste of the town could be no longer resisted. The history of the stage, however, from this period, will more properly come into the life of Garrick, respecting which many more materials have been carefully preserved than of Quin's; I shall, therefore, reserve the consideration of their joint performances until I have cause to treat more at large of Garrick's biography: in the mean time, it was admitted universally that Quin retired too soon from the stage, and there is good reason to believe that had Rich treated him with more discretion, the world would not so early have had cause to lament his loss.

Although Quin was a kind-hearted, jovial, and facetious man, I know not how it is, if it be not from the coarseness of some of his jokes, that a general impression prevails of his being a coarse character. No general persuasion was ever more fallacious. He was naturally a handsome man, beloved by his friends, and always on joyous terms with himself. Few understood the inclinations of man better, and none could be more indulgent to unpremeditated

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\* Bernard, in his *Retrospections of the Stage*, confirms this opinion by that of the late Earl of Conyngham, a nobleman who was in his time considered one of the best representatives of the true old British Peer. Quin was with his Lordship always spoken of as the great actor, and continually pitched by him against Garrick, especially in these characters, and he felicitously described their respective merits. In Cassius and Brutus in the quarrel-scene, he used to say that Quin resembled "a solid three-decker, lying quiet, and scorning to fire, but with evident power, if put forth, of sending his antagonist to the bottom:—Garrick, a frigate running round it, attempting to grapple, and every moment threatening an explosion that would destroy both."

error. While he cherished a little affectation in himself, to conceal the warmth and mildness of his dispositions, he discerned every degree of it in others with a shrewd eye. I think he was an accomplished specimen of a man of the world, of the right sort, for he was more amiable than he really seemed to be. Among other objects of interest to him was Macklin, the contemporary of so many ages of players; but the intractable nature of that choleric and vacillating person, as will appear in his life, often interrupted their friendship. Still, such was the superiority of Quin's demeanour, that Macklin never spoke of him but with respect, even while their intercourse was suspended. During their quarrel, whenever they met there was a studied deportment on both sides, which seemed to indicate that only the necessity of business could ever bring them together. But after this non-intercourse had existed several years, an accident put an end to their formality, and the occasion had so much peculiarity that it merits a circumstantial recital.

They attended the funeral of a brother performer, and after the interment, retired with several others to a tavern in Covent Garden. Neither of them was afraid of his bottle, and they both stayed so late, that about six o'clock in the morning they found themselves alone together. Both felt oddly at the circumstance. Quin, however, was the first to break the ice. He drank Macklin's health, who returned it, and then there was another pause. In the mean time Quin fell into a reverie for some time, when, suddenly recovering, he said to his companion—"There has been a foolish quarrel between you and me, which, though accommodated, I must confess I have not been able entirely to forget till now. The melancholy occasion of our meeting, and the accident of being left together, have made me, thank God, see my error. If you can therefore forget it too, give me your hand, and let us live together in future as brother performers." Macklin instantly held out his hand, and assured him of his friendship—a fresh bottle was called for; to this succeeded another—till Quin could neither speak nor move—chairs were called to take them home, but none could be found, when Macklin, who had still the use of his legs, desired two of the waiters to put Quin on his back, and triumphantly carried him to his lodgings.

This affair, however, could not repress the ever-ready sarcasms of Quin. When Macklin first performed his great part of Shylock, he was so struck with the ability he displayed in it, that he could not help exclaiming, "If God Almighty writes a legible hand, that man must be a villain!"—And when Macklin, without due consideration, performed the character of Pandolph in *King John*, Quin, on being asked what he thought of it, said, "He was a Cardinal who had been originally a parish-clerk." But his best joke on Macklin was in reply to some one, who remarked that he might make a good actor, having such strong lines in his face; "Lines, Sir," cried Quin, "I see nothing in the fellow's face but a d—ned deal of cordage!" In fact, if we may venture to judge by the freedom with which Quin occasionally treated him, considering that actor's true character, Macklin, with all his eccentricities, must have been a favourite with him.

When Macklin was bringing out his tragedy of *Henry VII. or the Popish Impostor*, Quin told him it would not succeed, and the event fulfilled the prediction. "Well," said Quin, "what do you think of my judgment now?"—"Why, I think posterity will do me justice," was the answer.—"I believe they will," retorted Quin, "for your play now is only damned, but posterity will have the satisfaction to know that both play and author met with the same fate."

Quin had many amusing extravagances of humour, and, among others, of making an annual excursion. In these he selected some agreeable lady, and agreed with her to accompany him on his tour as long as one hundred pounds would carry them. Quin gave the lady his name for the journey, and when the money was nearly spent they returned to London, and had a parting supper at the Piazzas. Covent Garden, where he paid her the balance, and dismissed the accommodating gentlewoman in nearly the following words; "Madam, for our mutual convenience I have given you the name of Quin for this some time past. There is no reason for carrying on this farce here; and now, Madam, give me leave to un-Quin you, and restore to you your own name for the future." Thus the ceremony ended, and the damsel went away.

Since I have broached the jokes and jests of Quin, I may as well go on with a few more. One day, at an auction of pictures, some one pointed out to him old General Guise, adding, "How very ill he looks!"—"Guise, Sir!" said Quin, "you're mistaken; he is dead these two years."—"Nay," said the other, "believe your eyes,—there he is." Quin put on his spectacles, examined him from head to foot for some time, and then exclaimed, "Why, yes, Sir, I'm right enough; he has been dead these two years, it is very evident, and has now only gotten a day-rule to see the pictures."

Perhaps, as a wit and an epicure, Quin is now more renowned than as an actor, for those who did remember him are all nearly extinct; and it is chiefly of his humour, and talent in appreciating the excellence of cookery, that he is now the subject of conversation. But even his merit in these will fade, for much of it, in respect to his wit, consisted in his manner: even in his living there was a practical jocularly that added to the zest of his enjoyment; and he assumed a peculiar humour in both that greatly increased the effect of what he said, and augmented his own relish of what he took. It was chiefly, however, as a practical joker that he excelled; and it must be confessed that there is often much coarseness, though combined with a curious shrewdness, in his sayings.

Previous to Macklin's time, it had been customary to represent Shylock as a low, mean personage, an elegant illustration of the ordinary player's conception of the part, but he conferred on it the true tragic energy of the poet, which it has ever since maintained; and Pope, it is said, cried of it, aloud in the pit,

"This is the Jew  
That Shakspeare drew."

Quin when he read it in the journals, curled his lip and echoed,

"Spew, reader, spew."

Quin was considered by the public as a kind of wholesale dealer in rough fun, and as much attention was paid to his wit sometimes as it probably deserved. Dining one day at a party in Bath, he uttered something which caused a general murmur of delight; a nobleman present, who was not illustrious for the brilliancy of his ideas, exclaimed, "What a pity it is, Quin, my boy, that a clever fellow like you should be a player!" Quin flashed his eye and replied, "What would your Lordship have me to be,—a Lord?"

Some of his sayings had, however, though not often, a playfulness and poetical beauty that merited no common praise. Being asked by a lady why there were more women in the world than men, "It is," said he, "in conformity with the arrangements of Nature, Madam; we always see more of heaven than of earth."

On another occasion, a lady one day, in speaking of transmigration, inquired of him "What creature's form would you hereafter prefer to inhabit?" The lady had a very beautiful neck, Quin looked at it, and said, "A fly's, Madam, that I might have the pleasure of sometimes resting on your ladyship's neck."

He sometimes made occasional visits to Plymouth to eat John Dories, and for some time he lived at hack and manger; on these occasions he resided at one of the inns which happened to be much infested with rats. "My drains," said the landlord, "run down to the quay, and the scents of the kitchen attract the rats."—"That's a pity," said Quin; "at some leisure moment, before I return to town, remind me of the circumstance, and perhaps I may be able to suggest a remedy." In the mean time he lived expensively, and at the end of eight weeks he called for his bill. "What!" said he, "one hundred and fifty pounds for eight weeks, in one of the cheapest towns in England!" However, he paid the bill, and stepped into his chaise. "Oh, Mr. Quin," said the landlord. "I hope you have not forgot the remedy you promised me for the rats."—"There's your bill," replied the wit, "show them that when they come, and if they trouble your house again, I'll be d—d!"

Quin's wit was sometimes distinguished for the drollery of the terms in which his remarks were couched. The original George Barnwell was David Ross, of Covent Garden theatre. In his latter days he grew very portly, and his face became so overloaded with fat as to defeat its expression. On the last occasion in which he appeared in that part, Quin was behind the scenes, and meeting Ross, said, "George Barnwell, David.—George Barnwell, an apprentice!—you look more like the Lord Mayor of London!"

Quin having had an invitation from a certain nobleman, who was reputed to keep a very elegant table, to dine with him, he accordingly waited upon his Lordship, but found the regale far from answering his expectation. Upon his taking leave, the servants, who were very numerous, had ranged themselves in the hall; Quin, finding that if he gave to each of them it would amount to a pretty large sum, asked, "Which was the cook?" who readily answered, "Me, Sir." He then inquired for the butler, who was as quick in replying as the other; when he said to the first, "Here's half-a-crown for my eating," and to the other, "Here's five shillings for

my wine ; but, by God, gentlemen, I never made so bad a dinner for the money in my life."

The first time Quin was invited to dine upon a turtle,—he must have been then a young man,—he was asked whether he preferred the *callipash* to the *callipee* ; and upon his acknowledging his ignorance, the donor of the treat, a West Indian, burst into a loud laugh, saying, "He thought so great an epicure as Mr. Quin could not be unacquainted with the exquisite niceties of so elegant a dish."—"It may be an elegant dish," said Quin, "but, if it had been fit for Christians, we should have been acquainted with it as soon as the wild Indians."

A certain officer in the army, who was not altogether so courageous as might have been wished for in a person of his station, having one night at Bath received the grossest personal affront, that of being taken by the nose, without any way resenting it, he waited upon Quin the next morning to ask his advice, and know how he should act. "Why, Sir," said he, "soap your nose for the future, and then, by God, they'll slip their hold."

Quin was asked why he did not marry, take a house, and set up an equipage. "I carry a coach, a wife, and a dinner always in my pocket," he replied ; "and I can either take the number, obtain a divorce, or turn off my cook whenever I please."

Sometime before he died, he was observing to an intimate acquaintance that he felt the old man coming upon him ; but that he had this satisfaction, let him die when he would, he owed nothing to any man, not even to James Quin.

One day he was ironically complimented by a nobleman, who was a placeman, on his happy retreat at Bath. "Look ye, my Lord," says he, "perhaps 'tis a sinecure your Lordship would not accept of ; but, I can assure you, I gave up fourteen hundred a-year for it."

Quin was asked once by a gentleman what he thought of Garrick's acting Sir John Brute. "Why, Sir," said Quin, "it is a part I never saw him in ; but I have seen him do Master Jackey Brute very often."

During the management of Mr. Fleetwood at Drury Lane, Quin was to make an apology for Mademoiselle Roland's not being able to perform a favourite dance, on account of having sprained her ankle. The audience was so greatly out of temper at her not appearing, that it required even the consequence of so capital an actor to gain their attention. Quin was appointed, and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Madam—a—a Roland has put her ankle out, I wish it had been her neck, and be d——d to her !" and then retired with a hem, amidst shouts of laughter and applause.

An author, after reading an extreme bad play to Quin, asked his opinion of it. He answered that it would not do by any means. "I wish," resumed the author, "you would advise me what is best to do with it."—"That I can," says Quin, "blot out one half and burn the other."

Quin once, in the character of Cato, received a blow in his face by an orange thrown from the upper gallery : such a circumstance would have disconcerted many an actor possessed of less presence of



mind, but instead of being disturbed, he wiped his face, and taking it up, observed, "It was not a Seville orange."

Being once applied to by an author of his acquaintance who had written a play, to introduce him, and recommend his piece to the manager, James readily agreed to do him all the service in his power; but observing the shabbiness of his clothes, asked him if he had any other dress to appear in. "Yes," replied the bard, "I have more clothes than I shall ever wear out." Quin asked an explanation; when the poet told him, in the first place, he had another coat at home that was so very ragged he could never wear it out, and that in the next place, he had three good suits at the pawnbroker's that he believed he should never get out to wear. Quin took the hint, and gave him five guineas to equip himself, introduced him to the manager, and his piece was brought on.

Mrs. Clive coming one night into the Green-room, humming an Italian air, "Pray," said she to Quin, "don't you think I take off Signora Something to a hair?" "Damn me, Madam," says Quin, "if I was thinking about you." "Sir John Brute," said she, "I beg pardon for interrupting your private meditations." "Madam," resumed Quin, "if spitting upon you was not taking notice of you, I would do it."

Mrs. Clive had one night mislaid one of her ear-rings, which were of some value, and in the heat of her passion she taxed the dressing-woman with having got it. The dresser protested her innocence. "Why," continued Mrs. C. "you have not the face to deny it. Why you can't help blushing at disowning it." Quin, who stood by during this controversy, told her very coolly, "She was quite mistaken, it was only the *reflection* of her face."

A young simple student, who attended the spouting clubs more than he did Westminster Hall, having made a slight acquaintance with Mr. Quin, he one night frankly told him his design was to come upon the stage, but that he wished to have the opinion of a competent judge before he actually put his design in execution, and without any more ceremony began to speak the soliloquy in *Hamlet*,

"To be, or not to be,—that is the question,"

Quin could not help interrupting him, "No question at all—not to be, upon my honour."

Quin had not, however, always the wit on his side; once, upon a journey to Somersetshire, having put up for a few days at a farmhouse, he turned his horse to grass, and lost him. Upon inquiring after him of a country fellow, and asking if there were any thieves or horse-stealers in his neighbourhood? the fellow answered, "No; we be all honest folk here, but there's one Quin, I think they call him, a strolling-player from London, mayhap he may have stole him."

Having a new wig brought home which he was to wear upon a particular occasion, a friend being by upon his trying it, before he had paid for it, complimented him for his taste, and highly approved the perriwig. "Faith, Sir," said Quin, "I know not how good it

may prove in the long run, but at *present* it has run me over head and ears in debt."

Quin and Ryan were once upon a journey in Wiltshire, when lighting at an inn where they proposed staying all night, they were told by the landlord there was not a room empty in the house except one, but that he could not recommend it to them for a particular reason; they desired, to be shown it, and finding it one of the best apartments in the house, they begged to know what was the reason he could not let them lodge there that night. "Why, Gentlemen, to tell you the truth, it is haunted." "Pshaw!" said Quin, "if that's all, bring us a bottle of your best, and get us supper as soon as you can." The landlord acquiesced, when the travellers having made a hearty meal, and drunk their bottle each, began to think it was high time to go to bed. "Ay," said Quin, "but we must dispatch this same ghost first, or perhaps we may have a troublesome guest when we are asleep." So saying, he drew his pistols, charged and placed them upon the table before him, when having called for an additional recruit of wine, "Now," said he, "we are prepared." Twelve o'clock struck and no ghost yet appeared, but presently a rumbling noise was heard in the chimney. The rattling of a chain soon became very distinct, and a figure descended whimsically clad, which made two or three motions, but without offering any violence. Hereupon, Quin took up a pistol that was ready primed, and expostulated to their spiritual visitor, "Look ye, Mr. Ghost, if you do not immediately acknowledge yourself to be of the human species, by G—d I'll make a ghost of you!" The phantom was too sensible to remonstrate, and falling upon his knees, roared "That he was master of the adjoining house, and had contrived an opening in the chimney, through which he made his way in that tremendous shape, in order to terrify the host's guests, and prevail upon him to quit the house, that he might supplant him." So ingenuous a declaration saved the ghost's life, but not his reputation; for the master of the inn being called up, and discovering his neighbour to be the evil spirit, the latter was never able to show his own mortal face again in the neighbourhood.

It was observed of Beau Nash, the King of Bath, that though he was very curious about other people's pedigrees, he seldom mentioned his own. Quin was one night somewhat severe upon him on this subject, and compared him to Gil Blas, who was ashamed of his father. "Look ye, James," said he, "I seldom mention my father in company, not because I have any reason to be ashamed of *him*, but because he has some reason to be ashamed of *me*."

Quin was one day lamenting that he grew old, when a shallow, impertinent young fellow, asked him what he would give to be as young as he was. "I would even submit," said Quin, "to be almost as foolish."

One evening, as he was drinking a bottle with Mallet the poet, and having given his opinion rather too freely on some of that bard's productions, he was so out of temper, that Quin could not please him in anything he said for the remainder of the evening. At length, he offered to wager a dozen of claret, that Mallet did not contradict the

next thing he said—"What's that?"—"Why," replied Quin, "that you are the greatest poet in England."

Quin being asked whether he thought there were many men who could produce such an edition of Shakspeare as Johnson's, "Yes," he replied, "many men, many women, and many children."

Quin was one night going upon the stage in the character of Cato, when Mrs. Cibber pulled him back, to tell him he had a hole in his stocking. "Darned stockings I detest," said Quin, "that seems premeditated poverty."

When in his last illness, the faculty were much divided in their opinion concerning his recovery, but his apothecary never had any doubt about it: one day, after he had felt his patient's pulse, Quin asked him what he thought now, "Why, Sir," answered he, "I think you'll do very well if we can but raise a *sweat*." "Then," said Quin, "only send in your *bill*, and I warrant you the thing is done."

Quin thought angling a very barbarous diversion, and on being asked why, gave this reason. "Suppose some superior being should bait a hook with venison and go a Quinming, I should certainly bite, and what a sight I should be dangling in the air."

When he first saw Westminster Bridge, he exclaimed, "Oh, that my mouth were that centre arch, and that the river ran claret!"

It is said, that during his last illness he attributed his disorder to having omitted his annual visit to Plymouth to eat John Dories, saying, "he considered it as salutary to his constitution as herrings were to a Dutchman, and that if he recovered he would eat nothing else all the days of his life." Probably this gave rise to the following lines, which appeared a few days after his death.

#### ON THE DEATH OF MR. QUIN.

Alas, poor Quin! thy jests and stories  
Are quite extinguished, and what more is,  
Where you're gone there's no John Dories,

It is, however, impossible to go on at this rate. The number of good things both given and taken by this celebrated man would constitute a volume by themselves, and the best cannot well be repeated, while in others, the style in which they were said often greatly increased their effect, and added glitter as well as point. I must, therefore, return from this desultory digression, and resume the regular narrative.

At the end of the season for 1748, Quin having taken some offence at the conduct of Rich, retired in a fit of resentment to Bath, although then under engagements to him. Rich, who knew that Quin would not be brought round by entreaty, thought to gain him back by contempt. And when Quin, who having indulged his spleen began to relent, and in his penitence wrote him in these words—

"I am at Bath.

QUIN."

The answer was as laconic, though not quite so civil—

“Stay there, and be damned.

RICH.”

This reply, it has been well said, cost the public one of the greatest ornaments on the stage; for Quin, upon receiving it, took a firm resolution of never engaging again with “so insolent a blockhead.” He, nevertheless, came every year to London, to play Sir John Falstaff for his old friend Ryan, till the year 1754, when, having lost two of his front teeth, he was compelled to decline the pleasure. The epistle which he wrote to Ryan has, however, much of his wonted terseness in it.

“My dear Friend,—There is no person on earth that I would sooner serve than Ryan—but, by G—d, I will whistle Falstaff for no man.”

I have already mentioned that Quin associated more openly with the wits of his time than any other on the stage, but there was no one for whom he entertained a more affectionate esteem than for Thomson, the poet of the Seasons. Hearing that Thomson was confined in a spunging-house for a debt of about seventy pounds, he repaired to the place. Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing him, and the more so as Quin told him he had come to sup with him, and that, as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed at the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern, and as a prelude half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, Quin said, “It is time now we should balance accounts—the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist on now acquitting the debt:” on saying this, he put down a note and took his leave, without waiting for a reply; but Quin had soon the pleasure to see him in affluence, Thomson having obtained the place of Surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands.

Besides being an eminent elocutionist, Quin is celebrated for various accomplishments—among others for his knowledge of English history, and is said to have judiciously corrected many errors in the text of Shakspeare. These merits, besides those he exhibited on the stage, attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, the father of his late Majesty King George III., who appointed him to instruct his children in good English. Under his tuition, they acquired a desire to perform the parts they rehearsed, and Prince George, afterwards the King, under the management of Quin, represented with his brothers and sisters several plays at Leicester House. Quin, it is well known, when informed how his Majesty delivered his first speech, exclaimed, “Ay, I taught the boy to speak!” Nor did his Majesty forget his old tutor, for soon after his accession to the throne, he gave orders, without any application having been made to him, that Quin should be paid a genteel pension from the Civil List—a judicious custom, much to be regretted that it has gone out of fashion!

Quin, however, was not much in need of a pension, for upon quitting the stage, as he was never married, he sank half of his fortune with the Duke of Bedford, and with two thousand pounds he

received, and his annuity of two hundred pounds, he permanently retired to Bath. But before he went thither, I ought to relate an adventure which happened to him about that time, in the Bedford Coffee-house.

Theophilus Cibber, who owed him a grudge, as has been related in its proper place, came one night strutting into the Coffee-house, and having walked up to the fireplace, said,

"I am come to call that capon-lined rascal to an account for taking liberties with my character."

Somebody present told him he had passed Quin, who was sitting at the other end of the room.

"Ay," says Theophilus, "so I have, sure enough; but I see he is busy, and I won't disturb him now, I'll take another opportunity."

"But," added his informer, willing to have some sport, "he sets off for Bath to-morrow, and may not perhaps be in town again this twelvemonth."

"Is that the case," cried Cibber, nettled at finding his courage suspected, "then I'll e'en chastise him now. You—Mr. Quin, I think you call yourself,—I insist upon satisfaction for the affront you gave me—demme!"

"If you have a mind to be flogged," replied Quin, "I'll do it for you with all my heart—demme!"

"Draw, Sir, or I'll be through your guts this instant."

"This," replied Quin, "is an improper place to rehearse Lord Foppington in; but if you'll go under the Piazza, I may perhaps make you put up your sword faster than you drew it."

A duel was the consequence in the Piazza, where Quin was slightly wounded, and Cibber fled. Quin, however, was able to go to Bath next day, where he passed upwards of sixteen years without any interruption to his ease, contentment, and pleasntry. From the time he retired from the stage his friendship with Garrick seemed to ripen; a regular correspondence existed between them, and he regularly every year visited his friends in London, and passed at that time about a week with the theatric monarch in his villa at Hampton. His last excursion was in the summer of 1765, and was spent with hilarity; but in the midst of it, an eruption appeared on his hand, which the faculty were of opinion would turn to mortification; and their apprehension depressed his spirits. It is supposed that his anxiety brought on a fever; at least that is certain, that his hand was cured, but that the fever carried him off. He was not a tractable patient; on the contrary, being a free liver, and fond of good eating and drinking, he was not always obedient to rule. The day before he died he drank a bottle of claret, and being sensible of his approaching end, said, he could wish that the last scene were over, though he was in hopes he should be able to go through it with becoming dignity; he was not mistaken. He died about four o'clock in the morning on Tuesday the 21st of January 1766.

## LACY RYAN.

I AM perhaps induced to insert some account of this performer, more because he was the friend of Quin, than for his own talents and reputation. He was born in the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, about the year 1694, and was educated at St. Paul's School, and afterwards placed an apprentice with Mr. Lacy, his godfather, an attorney; but a strong propensity for the stage ruled his fortunes. In 1710 he was introduced, by the favour of Sir Richard Steele, into the Haymarket company, and performed, in 1712, the part of Marcus in *Cato*, during the first run of that more celebrated than excellent drama. He was then very young, not more than eighteen, but he possessed industry combined with good talent, and rapidly rose in public estimation by the ability he showed in several eminent parts both in tragedy and comedy.

In his person he was deemed handsome, and his judgment was esteemed accurate and critical: no one could understand his author better, nor deliver his part with more correctness or with more musical propriety. His feelings were strong, and when indulged often produced a great impression on his audience; but they were sometimes obtuse, and the effects of his performance were not always similar, far less uniform, in the same part. His chief defect was in his voice, which he never could master, even to his own satisfaction; and he had the misfortune, on two several occasions, to sustain severe injuries in that most essential organ.

In an accidental affray with some watermen, while yet a very young man, he received a blow which turned his nose, and though the deformity in consequence was not remarkable, his voice, which was naturally a sharp and shrill treble, was altered without advantage. And subsequently some years he was assailed by mistake in the street by several ruffians, who wounded him in the mouth, and so disabled him, that he was unable to perform for some months after, nor did he ever recover his fair natural voice.

In almost any other profession the injury would, perhaps, not have been important; but to a poor man, who depended for his livelihood on his voice, it could not be considered as less than a vital calamity. I can conceive nothing more depressing than a misfortune of this kind; the full consciousness of being able to gratify the expectations of the town remained, but to make them sensible that the injury he had sustained was not of the most essential nature was not in his power. Yet still the good sense of Ryan sustained him under this trying injury; and it is said, that the extreme propriety of his deportment, the solicitude with which he studied his parts, and the carefulness of his delivery, together with his unexceptionable private character, made him ever estimable with the public; insomuch that Frederick Prince of Wales, with many of the nobility, by their kindness and testimonies, contributed to make him some amends for what he suffered.

An anecdote is told of him which can never be repeated without sympathy. He lost a favourite nephew, and was particularly

desirous to pay the last mark of his affection to the remains. He solicited Rich the manager, to whom he was then engaged, to grant him permission ; but with that caprice in the exercise of power which he often indulged, Rich refused, and in consequence the funeral was ordered at an early hour ; but by the dilatoriness of the undertaker it took place so late, that Ryan had only time to follow the coffin to the church-door, where his feelings so overcame him, that he burst into a vehement fit of tears, and excited, in no ordinary degree, the sympathy of all those who were spectators of the affecting scene.

Were I called on to express distinctly why I have a particular attachment to the memory of Quin, the ever faithful friend of Ryan, I should feel myself at a great loss to explain. But a considerable intimacy with the biography of many actors has made me think there was something about him greater and better than about most of them ; his affections seem to have been always gentlemanly, and his conduct high-minded. Towards Ryan he was not only a friend, but a benefactor of that kind by which benefits are conferred as incumbent and obligatory duties. For several years after Quin had retired from the stage as a profession, he annually performed the character of Sir John Falstaff for the benefit of Ryan, and when his own growing infirmities impaired his power, he exerted his influence to procure the patronage of his acquaintance.

That Ryan deserved the estimation in which he was held by those who regarded him as a friend, cannot be doubted ; few men evinced more wisdom and prudence in the selection of their intimates, or so much preferred worthy to genteel society. He died on the 15th of August 1760, at Bath, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, more esteemed for his private worth than for his professional talent, and yet it was of the most meritorious description.

## MRS. WOFFINGTON.

THE biography of this celebrated beauty, is calculated to rebuke those who suppose that persons of quality derive from their blood some endowment of manners which ever distinguishes them from the commonalty of mankind. The whole style of her conduct on the stage, and much of her fascination in private life, tended to prove that the dignity of station, and the precepts of the teacher can only assist Nature ; and that even with all the helps that opulence and intelligence can bestow, the universal mother will at times send forth from herself, and amidst the most unfavourable circumstances, individuals of such grace and genius as no effort of education ever can rival. Vulgar manners are, indeed, ever found in the extremes of society—it is only where no restraint exists that genuine vulgarity is found ; urbanity is but another word for that kind of manners induced by habit, and by deference for the feelings of others, which it is so much the business of good breeding to

inculcate, but which Nature sometimes voluntarily confers. The regal palace and the beggar's hovel are the seats of true vulgarity, and it is only in them that the basest qualities of man are found. But I shall run into a more recondite disquisition than becomes my purpose.

With the exception of Mrs. Woffington, we have but doubtful examples of that spirited, yet lady-like manner, for which she was so surpassingly eminent, having ever been seen in the low estate of her natal condition.

She was the daughter of John Woffington, a journeyman brick-layer—poor in circumstances, and without one connexion to excite his ambition to break the thralldom of poverty. Still, though in the humblest walk of life, and amidst all the coarseness of vulgarity, his situation was not without the consolation of some of the virtues.

He lived near George Lane, in Dame Street, Dublin—a sober, honest, pains-taking man, full of the kindest domestic affections, and esteemed by his superiors for the homely diligence with which he attended to his business. His wife managed the finance department of their frugal household with economy, and was as solicitous as himself that their children should, as they advanced in life, repay their anxiety and love.

But their mutual happiness was soon interrupted—a violent fever seized the husband, and his wife solicited in vain permission to send for a physician. He had a prejudice, not uncommon in their class of life, against the faculty, and would not consent until it was too late. It is unnecessary to mention, that even if this honest man had not been ambitious to keep his family comfortable and decent, to the full extent of their means, his condition was never such as could have enabled him to leave them otherwise than very poor. In fact, his last illness, with the medicines and necessities he required, consumed all he had, and he left his wife and children abject, and in debt. The parish defrayed the expense of his funeral.

The widow, being thus burdened to provide for the support of her family, saw no choice but to become a washerwoman, an avocation which her health and vigour enabled her to undertake properly. Her neighbours at once commended her humble prudence, and giving her their linen, encouraged her industry. By this means, with hard labour, care, and affection, the poor woman procured a lowly but unimpeachable livelihood for herself and the children.

We have not ascertained the exact day when our heroine was born, but at the death of her father she was about ten years old, and even at that early age her beauty was remarkable. An irresistible gracefulness was conspicuous in all her actions; a pleasing air, and, for her condition, a most surprising elegance, shone, as it were, around her. Her eyes were black of the darkest brilliancy, and while it was said they beamed with the most beautiful lustre, they revealed every movement of her heart, and showed, notwithstanding she was but little indebted to education, that acute discernment which distinguished her career throughout life. Her eyebrows, arched and vividly marked, possessed a flexibility which greatly increased the expression of her other features; in love and terror they were powerful beyond con-



ception, but the beautiful owner never appeared to be sensible of their force. Her complexion was of the finest hue, and her nose being gently aquiline, gave her countenance an air of great majesty; all her other features were of no inferior mould—she was altogether one of the most beautiful of Eve's daughters, and so many charms, combined with her spirit and shrewdness, indicated that she was assuredly destined for distinction.

When in her fifth year, her father sent her to an old woman's school in the neighbourhood, where she continued until his death; she was then removed to assist her mother, and commonly employed by her to carry home the clothes she washed, in the drudgery of which she was praised for her modesty and her solicitude. It was in the pursuit of this employment that the adventure happened to her which decided her future fortunes.

A Mademoiselle Violante, now no longer remembered but as the first instructress of Mrs. Woffington, was the mistress of a show-booth in Dame Street, and having often seen our heroine fetching water from the Liffey for her mother's use, thought she was destined for a gayer employment. She accordingly resolved to have some conversation with her, and if she answered the expectations inspired by her appearance, to engage her as an apprentice. This resolution was soon carried into effect.

Our heroine one day returning home from one of her mother's friends, to whom she had been in the exercise of her calling, was met in the street by the maid of Mam'selle, who informed her that her mistress wanted to speak with her. She obeyed the message, and the French lady being confirmed in her presentiment, determined to apply to Mrs. Woffington to allow her daughter to be apprenticed. The poor woman accepted the proposal with joy, and our innocent and graceful heroine was assigned to be taught the dramatic art by the sorceress of the booth.

Next day, with a light heart and bright hopes, she quitted the lowly drudgery of her mother's ceaseless toil, and was received with open arms by Violante, who, much pleased with her own discernment, predicted that she was destined to be an ornament, under her tuition, of the stage. She accordingly began instantly to give her pupil instructions, bought her fine clothes, and taught her dancing—made her known to her friends as a young lady she had a particular regard for, and who would, she had no doubt, realize all the high opinions she had formed of her talents.

Her rapid progress confirmed the anticipations of her mistress, who, proud of her accomplishments, would not consent to withhold her longer than necessary from the public, and decided that she should appear at the next opening of the booth, in a first-rate character. "Small things are great to little men." Mam'selle was full of importance with this affair, and the question she oftener asked was, in what shall Miss appear? At last Polly in *The Beggar's Opera* was fixed on, and in the rehearsals never was such a goddess seen.

A young creature, not yet in her teens, without education, practice, or friends, was naturally greatly dismayed at the thought of a public appearance, but nevertheless, from the time that her mistress had

intimated that she was to come out as Polly, she applied with industry to the part, and having an excellent memory, was soon mistress of it all. But still she was diffident, and trembled with timidity, and often expressed her dread that she should not be able to give energy and fitness to the sentiments in expression. Her mistress, however, had no fears: she saw only her abilities and beauty, and was lavish in her commendation. All the art that could be employed was put in requisition to awaken public curiosity, and bespeak the applauses of the audience. Had her appearance been at Drury Lane or Covent Garden—among the squares of London, more industry could not have been exerted, than there was on this occasion by the mistress of the booth, to stir the inhabitants of the Dublin lanes.

At length, the fearful evening comes—the hour arrives—the house is full, the curtain is raised, and the play begins. Trembling like the aspen, lo! our heroine—the applause thunders—she can scarcely look to the audience—every face appears the countenance of a merciless judge—she speaks, and the audience are astonished; the justness of her elocution, the grace of her action, and the elegance of her figure, cannot be sufficiently admired—plaudits are extorted from the most judicious as well as from the most ill-natured. The intelligent predicted her future renown.

Next night she played again the same part, and being more at ease and in better confidence, confirmed all the opinions she had inspired. Fortunately, the commendations she received operated to a favourable issue; instead of tending to fill her with conceit, they only stimulated her emulation—became incentives to her endeavours; and in consequence, though it was but a Dublin booth-audience she had to please, she became as assiduous to merit their approbation as if it had been of the most fashionable description: and verified the truth that, with the greatest natural endowments, excellence is only to be obtained by perseverance and industry. She continued to toil for fame, and was not only regarded as the prop and pillar of the booth-theatre, but as a performer of no ordinary merit. A salary of thirty shillings a-week was soon allowed—a high sum in those days for so juvenile an actress, even at the great theatres,—and she took lodgings for herself. But my task is with her public character. I have only, therefore, to notice with sorrow, that she was for some time induced to withdraw herself from the stage, and to prefer a life of profligacy to the exertion of those talents which first exposed her to temptation.

Having been allured to London, she there determined to renew her connexion with the stage, and accordingly waited on the manager of Covent Garden theatre to solicit an engagement, and it is said paid no less than nineteen visits to Mr. Rich before she was admitted—at last her patience became exhausted; she told the footman that her name was Woffington, and that she would not wait on his master again. On hearing her name, the man flew to his master, and speedily returned with civil expressions of his readiness to see her.

It would seem that the conduct of the servant when he did not know her, contrasted with his alacrity when she revealed herself, had somewhat moved her petulance, but it ought not. He only did

his duty, and it is not to be imagined that he was in either case actuated by any feeling for or against her. No person, who does not choose to say who he is, has any right, especially in London, to expect admission—a small point, both of good-manners and common-sense, that cannot be sufficiently attended to by those who have business to transact with personages to whom they have to seek access.

Our heroine being admitted to Mr. Rich, found him lolling on a sofa, with a play-book in his left hand, and a china cup in the other, sipping tea; around, and about him were seven-and-twenty cats of different sizes at play, some staring at him, some eating the toast out of his mouth, some licking milk from a cup, some frisking, others demurely seated on the floor, and others perched on his shoulders and arms, knees, and even on his head. This is the first time that the magician of Pantomimes was very fitly described, crowned, instead of laurel, with a grimalkin.

An engagement to appear at Covent Garden theatre during the ensuing season was, in due time, brought to maturity, and our heroine came out in her favourite part of Sir Harry Wildair. The Dublin audience had appreciated her dawning merits in that character, but London alone was capable of discerning her full excellence. Her reception was far beyond her expectations, and every performance revealed new beauties. She acted the same part for two-and-twenty successive nights, and the last with undiminished spirit and applause.

An amusing and characteristic anecdote is told of her at this time. The young gentleman who had allured her from Dublin having made overtures of marriage to a lady in the country, our heroine resolved, in revenge, to break off the match. She accordingly dressed herself in man's attire, and, attended by a male servant, went to the lady's residence, but was at first baffled in her attempts to make her acquaintance; at last she heard of a public ball to be given by some of the gentlewoman's friends, to celebrate her coming of age, and resolved to be present. Properly dressed, and disguised by painting her eyebrows, and using other arts, of which her profession made her mistress, she attended the ball undiscovered by every one, even by her faithless friend. Her dancing and demeanour attracted universal admiration, and watching an opportunity, she had the address to persuade the young lady to walk a minute with her, and also to become her partner for the remainder of the evening. She then took an opportunity of discovering the real character of the lover. The bride fainted at the tale; the company dispersed; our heroine returned to town, exulting in the success of her stratagem.

After the splendour of her success at Covent Garden, she went back to Dublin, on an engagement with the manager of the theatre there. Her salary from Rich was nine pounds a-week, but the Irish manager offered her fourteen, which she gladly accepted, and on her arrival she made a grand display with an equipage and two footmen.

The Irish were at this time, and may be so still, much addicted to the theatre. They conceived that no soil but their own could produce first-rate performers, and our heroine was welcomed as one

of the best and brightest that the isle had produced : crowds flocked to see her ; the house was filled ; open flew the doors, and there was an audience.

The distinction she had obtained by appearing on the British stage, the improved charms which time had developed on her person, her native mother wit, polished by an unrestrained conversation with persons of high rank, her easy air, her generous freedom and affable carriage, rendered her a welcome guest to the frequenters of the theatre, and the lovers of those qualities in the fair sex.

The parts she acted in were all of the most conspicuous kind. Her success as Sir Harry Wildair encouraged her to assume Lothario, a performance of singular merit, but it divided the opinion of her admirers. Some thought her action and elocution were not judicious, and also that her conception of the character was erroneous, as it was too obvious that a woman played the part.

Though many anecdotes favourable to her warmth of heart, and animated with the spirit of the character, may be found, not only in the publications of her time, but in the memoirs of her contemporaries, there is a particular instance of her generosity in Dublin, which should not be omitted. Her maid, who had been with her several years, having gained the heart of a young tradesman, resolved in exchange to give him her hand. On the morning of their nuptials, our heroine called in the girl and said, "You long served me with integrity, and it is time to make you some recompense. You are now going to be united to an honest man, and since he is of some substance, it is not fit you should go to him penniless. There is something to begin your new scene with, and I request you to accept it as a token of my regard ;" so saying, she put a purse of one hundred guineas into her hand.

At this period the theatre was a place of the most fashionable resort in Dublin. It was there, what the Opera House was in London, the rendezvous of all the metropolitan gentry, and perhaps the only scene from which politics were, among the higher orders, systematically excluded : but the manager was too patriotic to be prudent ; he attempted to make the stage the pulpit of politics, and in the attempt, being only supported by the galleries, he was ruined, which obliged our heroine to return to London, where she resumed her place on the boards of Covent Garden, and continued a delightful favourite until she left the stage.

By all the records which have been preserved of this fascinating woman, an amazing vein of shrewdness and good sense strikingly distinguished her ; even the cause of her retirement shows the firmness of her mind, and the superiority to which she might have aspired. It is related of her, that having heard a sermon which turned on sins similar to her past errors, she was so filled with sorrow at the manner in which she had lived, that she resolved to quit the theatre and endeavour to improve her life—a resolution which she carried strictly into effect ; and without the airs of a devotee or the cant of a Methodist, continued in her penitence with exemplary propriety to the end. She had allowed her mother twenty pounds per annum, but when she entered

on her new course she augmented it to thirty ; and her sister, whom she educated in France, was married to a man of rank and fortune. In this little domestic arrangement good sense was apparent. She made her mother comfortable ; had she raised her to a different sphere, she would only have rendered her condition unhappy.

After her retirement her conduct is spoken of, by all who have expressed an opinion of her, as something like a phenomenon. It was simple, graceful, and pious. It partook of all that was blameless in her previous life. The stage alone she regarded with some degree of aversion, because it had ministered to her early vices, and professed to teach virtue, but was far otherwise in effect. In this respect, some of those who were offended with her retirement, thought they could perceive affectation ; but their own spleen deceived them—for she was one of those few penitents who condemn their follies, but do not let their contrition corrode their amiable qualities.

On the 17th May 1757, she took her leave of the stage, in the part of *Rosalind* ; but she did not long survive her retirement, for on the 28th of March 1760, in the forty-second year of her age, she died, and was buried at Teddington. In a monody, published at the time, her professional character is drawn with considerable taste and feeling.

\* \* \*

Whene'er we view'd the Roman's sullied fame,  
Thy beauty justified the hero's shame.  
What heart but then must Anthony approve,  
And own the world was nobly lost for love ?  
What ears could hear in vain thy cause implor'd,  
When soothing arts appeased thy angry lord ?  
Each tender breast the rough Ventidius blam'd  
And Egypt gain'd the sigh Octavia claim'd,  
Thy eloquence each hush'd attention drew,  
While Love usurp'd the tears to virtue due.  
See Phædra rise majestic o'er the scene !  
What raging pangs distract the hapless Queen !  
How does thy sense the poet's thought refine,  
Beam thro' each word, and brighten every line ;  
What nerve, what vigour, glows in every part,  
While classic lays appear with classic art !  
Who now can bid the proud Roxana rise,  
With love and anger sparkling in her eyes ?  
Who now shall bid her breast in fury glow  
With all the semblance of imperial woe ?  
While the big passion raging in her veins,  
Would hold the master of the world in chains.  
But Alexander now forsakes our coast,  
And ah ! Roxana is for ever lost !

Nor less thy power when rigid virtue fir'd  
The chaster bard and purer thoughts inspir'd :  
What kneeling form appears with steadfast eye,  
Her bosom heaving with devotion's sigh ?  
'Tis she ! in thee we own the mournful scene,  
The fair resemblance of a martyr Queen !\*

\* Lady Jane Grey, Act 7.

Here Guido's skill might mark thy speaking frame,  
And catch from thee the painter's magic flame !

Blest in each art ! by Nature form'd to please,  
With beauty, sense, with elegance and ease !  
Whose piercing genius studied all mankind,  
All Shakspeare opening to thy vig'rous mind,  
In every sense of comic humour known,  
In sprightly sallies, wit was all thy own,  
Whether you seem'd the cit's more humble wife,  
Or shone in Townley's higher sphere of life,  
A Proteus still, in all the varying range,  
Thyself the same, divine in every change.

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### THOMAS WESTON.

THE genius of the stage defies all theory. It might have been expected that a profession, whose object is to afford pleasure, and persons who derive their substance from the favour of the public, would be distinguished for purity of conduct beyond all others ; but it is not so. Perhaps, on the contrary, the conduct of the players is the most exceptionable tolerated ; and yet certainly there is nothing in the business of the drama which countenances loose manners, and there have been both actors and actresses of more than common propriety in all the scenes of private life. This remark is forced by the memoirs of the present hero. Nothing but his excellence as a comedian could have raised him from the basest condition, for as a man there is nothing in his story to claim respect—all is thoughtlessness and profligacy, with a sort of arch cunning, amusing only to those who did not suffer by its stratagems.

Thomas Weston was the son of the chief cook of King George II. —the office has before supplied the stage with at least one other celebrated performer. Where and when he made his first appearance on the world has not been ascertained, nor is that a point of much importance to determine. As early as his sixteenth year he had formed a predilection for the stage, and was an ardent frequenter of the playhouses. He also, about that period, had become acquainted with several actors, in all probability the letter-deliverers and stage-messengers, and as a subscriber to a spouting-club, deemed it no small glory to pay his crown to the fund which the members had instituted, to enable them to buy a curtain, lamps, and candles, with some of the other paraphernalia of dramatic representation.

His first appearance in this society was as Richard the Third in the tent-scene, and the battle with Richmond—and though his rank was of the vilest description, he received many audible applauses from his spectators as encouragement. Applause in all vocations is the nurse of merit. It was, however, justly said, that in their private opinion his acting was execrable, and his voice in no way

adapted for the stage ; but whatever other people might think, he was delighted with himself, and revelled in dreams of immortality.

His father procured for him the place of turnbroach, or turnspit, in the royal kitchen, worth, at that time, about thirty pounds a year, and which, like many other important offices of the government, might be executed by deputy ; our hero availed himself of the privilege, and held the dignity to his death. He was also an under clerk of the kitchen, and during the lifetime of George II. went once in the yacht with his Majesty to Hanover.

On his return from the Continent he regarded himself as a travelled man, and showed his knowledge of the world by enacting animated parts in many street brawls, and was often bailed from the watch-house. In a word, he was a wild and obstreperous lad, irreclaimable by any kind of advice, and being unfit for civil life, he was sent on board a man-of-war : to this he the more readily consented, in the hope that his father would pay his debts, rig him out with new clothes, and put money in his purse.

Accordingly, the appointment of a midshipman in the Warspite was procured for him, and our hero, in his uniform, sword, and cockade, strutted for a few days among his old friends at Covent Garden ; but being ordered on board, and obliged to obey, he was shown down into the orlope, which in those days was no paradise. Tom thought it an odd place, and a sad fate to be stowed in such a hole, worse than a night-cellar, where no light ever beamed but only that of candles all day long ; to eat off a trencher, with a sea-chest for his table, and to sleep in a bag as he called a hammock. These things have since been a little mended ; the orlope is not now quite a purgatory, and the inhabitants have been advanced from youngers to young gentlemen.

Before the ship arrived in the Long Reach our hero was heartily tired of his berth, and his ingenuity was at work to contrive the means of escape ; but the captain had given orders that none of the midshipmen should be allowed to go on shore. Three weeks had elapsed ; Tom's stock was nearly all consumed ; his liquors were drunk out by himself and his messmates, and he could tell how many steps it was from the gangway to the cabin-door, and no new amusement but counting them again was forthcoming.

Necessity, as the proverb says, is the mother of invention, and our hero was fertile in expedient. He had a friend in the War Office, and he got this friend to write him a letter, as from authority, sealed with the official seal, acquainting him that a commission in the army was preparing for him, and to come to London to receive it. The letter duly arrived, was immediately shown to the Captain, who, not doubting the truth of the contents, gave him leave. Tom jumped into a Gravesend-boat, and bade farewell to his messmates, chest, and bedding, thinking liberty worth them all.

On reaching London, he did not go to his father's, but as long as his money and means lasted, enjoyed himself. But his wardrobe evidently soon began to decrease, for his cash having the wings of the morning, or rather the bat-wings of the night, was gone, and he had begun to borrow on his clothes ; sometimes he dined upon a

waicoat, went to the play on a shirt, and breakfasted upon a pair of stockings—satisfactory indications of his destiny.

In this desperation of his circumstances he thought of the stage ; having served a good apprenticeship, and being persuaded, from the strength of his desire, that he had great talents for acting in tragedy, and also being nearly a whole inch taller than Garrick, he accordingly enlisted in Oliver Carr's company, then at Enfield.

This company was in those days famous of its kind : it had many lines of circunvallation round London, and from time to time pitched its tent at every town and village within twenty miles of the metropolis. It was then under the management of Oliver's widow, who preserved the name of the old firm. Things worth nothing are easily had—our hero was permitted by the old lady to join her ranks, but the sharing was so small that no one could live upon it. However, he sold the remainder of his wardrobe, and set on foot to join the corps, with a young lady bound on the same adventure.

Having reached head quarters, Tom made his debut in the part of Richard III. and though all the bumpkins in the house were convulsed with laughter at his queer figure, he wondered what the fools were laughing at, and thought with contempt of Garrick.

The night following, his fair and prudent companion made her first appearance as Mrs. Sullen, and our hero undertook Scrub, in which he acquitted himself with such excellence, that he was astonished at the hearty applause which crowned his performance. Every body was in rapture with him, insomuch that Mrs. Carr, the manageress, when she paid him his share of the profit, no less than three shillings-and-sixpence, advised him to cultivate low comedy. But, like the stag in the fable, he scorned his legs, and admiring his horns, looked tragical.

With the Dowager Carr he visited several towns, at which his benefit and sharings put together amounted to about five shillings per week. It is not, however, to be supposed that Tom subsisted upon so small a sum ; wherever he went, he found credit at the public-houses, and left hieroglyphics in chalk behind the doors. But this could not last for ever, so he resolved to return home to beg his father's pardon, and went accordingly to London.

Having come to town, he got an order to the play, where he met an old schoolfellow, who had married a girl with some money. Tom made his case known, borrowed five guineas, with which he enjoyed himself, and changed his filial mind. Instead of going home, he was induced to join another company about fifty miles off, and the manager gave him half a guinea for the expenses of the journey. The usual allowance being one guinea for every hundred miles, and the payment of the carriage of the performer's articles ; but our hero, with the generosity of the profession, and inseparable from his circumstances, did not put the new company to any expense for his.

He joined in high spirits—saw a tolerable theatre, some regularity, and was again for shining with fret and strut as a hero, but was prevented, and compelled to come forth as Scrub, which he performed with the greatest éclat ; he afterwards attempted several parts in tragedy, and had occasion to curse the defective taste and judgment of the audience.



Strolling companies are, in general, partnerships or commonwealths, where all share alike. The manager, for his trouble, care, and finding clothes and scenes, is entitled to four shares, which are called *dead ones*. His duty is to manage the treasury and to prepare the scheme of division, after paying bills, servants, lights, carriages, and all incidental charges, and to keep a book wherein all these matters are set down for the inspection of the company. This the manager of Tom's company balefully omitted to do, and divided the receipts as he thought proper, ever complaining that he was in advance. Our hero, conceiving all not right, took upon himself the office of prolocutor for his brethren, who bravely promised to back him, and insisted on seeing the stock-book. The manager asked him "If he wished to pay the debt the company owed?" Tom answered, "He had a right to see it, whether or not." High words arose, and he was told he should play no more. The rest of the performers, who had promised to stand by him, slunk away, lest their sentence should be similar. Tom damned them all, and directly steered his course to a small troop that was roaring and rattling about twenty miles off.

This new company was worse than Mrs. Carr's; but the manager was honest, for there was nothing to filch, the receipts of the house not paying more than the incidental charges. Tom, therefore, made away with almost every thing he had, and with another of the performers was reduced to the utmost extremity, till they had only a shirt apiece, which they did not well know how to get washed. At length, they ventured to go a whole day without one, having only a handkerchief about their necks. The washerwoman promised them in the evening in time for the stage, but in the morning they were sadly distressed, as their landlady usually came in for money to provide breakfast before they were up, and it was evident, unless some expedient was devised, would discover the nakedness of the land. In this crisis a happy thought occurred; they resolved to make the sleeve of an old shirt personate the entire fabric. Tom first put it on, and when the old woman came in, stretched out his hand and gave her the money. He soon, however, quitted this company, and set off for London, with all his wardrobe on his back.

On his arrival, he found that Yates and Shuter had taken a booth in Bartholomew fair, and he got an engagement with them during the fair. He paraded himself in his stage-dress, in a gallery before the booth, between each performance, and played nine times in the day for a guinea. This money set him a little upon his legs.

By means of a friend, he was soon after engaged at Foote's, in the Haymarket, in a very low cast; for even at the coming out of *The Minor*, in the year 1760, he only played Dick.

On joining Foote, he married a young lady, a milliner in the Haymarket, and she appeared in the theatre as Lucy, in *The Minor*: her forte was in singing and sentimental comedy.

His reputation was now rising: at the end of the season he engaged himself and his wife at Norwich, where he stayed some time. He, however, again returned to the Haymarket, and played Jerry Sneak, which stamped him a favourite. At the end of the season he went with Mossop to Dublin, but did not perform with the same

success as he had done in England. He, therefore, returned to his engagement at the Haymarket.

One season he went to Chichester, Salisbury, etc. where words arose between him and his wife, and they separated. But he was now on the road to preferment, for at the close of the Haymarket season he got an engagement at Drury Lane at a salary of three pounds per week, and during the absence of Garrick in Italy, played Abel Drugger, and excelled, in public opinion, every one who had played the part.

One of his companions at this time was Dick Hughes, who had the prudence to heal many a breach in politeness which Tom made when in liquor. Tom now took up his residence with a fair one in the elegant purlieus of Mutton Hill, at the bottom of Leather Lane, Holborn, but owing to advances made to his creditors by the managers, he did not receive above half of his weekly salary. This, as he had no forethought, pinched him excessively, and the pittance was entirely owing before it became due. But notwithstanding, he frequently neglected rehearsals, and even absented himself from the performance—an irregularity which obliged Garrick and Lacy to discharge him.

This brought him to his senses, and upon an examination of his affairs, he found them bad enough. He knew not how to proceed, but, pressed by necessity, he requested two of his acquaintances at Drury Lane to lay his case before the company, and to beg a collection for him. When the circumstances were made known, Garrick forgot his anger, sent him a present supply, and received him into the theatre again. When their benevolence reached him, he had neither hat nor waistcoat to wear; but he returned to his duty, and a night was fixed for his benefit. The day before, however, he did not appear, no bills were printed for his night, and of course there was no play, so that by his caprice the company lost a day's salary, and himself the probable profits that might have accrued.

Foote, who on every occasion was his friend, mentioned his difficulties to several of the nobility, and a subscription of seventy pounds was raised to pay his debts. This stopped some gaps, and he contrived to have a part of it, by giving a friend a couple of notes of hand, for which he gave the money, and Tom spent it jovially, laughing at the trick by which he purchased the pleasure.

His debts, however, again increased, and before even the summer season was over he could never show his head in public, unless on a Sunday. He then lived at Newington, in Surrey, and stole into the theatre, when he wanted, by a way few would have thought of. The doors of the Haymarket were always beset by bailiffs, and the back way, by Mr. Foote's house in Suffolk-street, was also not safe: he therefore went into the Tennis-court, James-street, and getting out at the top of the building, entered the theatre by the upper windows of the dressing-rooms. This road he pursued for a whole season unsuspected, Dick Hughes always going before him as an advanced-guard, to see that the coast was clear.

During this season Foote took a lease of the Edinburgh theatre

for three years, at six hundred pounds per annum, and our hero entered into an engagement with him for Edinburgh, at five pounds per week.

Until the time when he should set out for Scotland, he lived in the Haymarket theatre. During this recess he kept close except on Sundays, and as the dressing-rooms wherein he lived were rather dark and dull, he usually after dinner brought a table into the lobby, and shutting the half-door, which had spikes on the top of it, took the air and smoked his pipe without fear of the bailiff. Once, indeed, he was outwitted; a man, whose face he was unacquainted with, came to the hatch, and having some clothes covered with green cloth, like a tailor, asked if Mr. Foote was at home. Tom unsuspectingly answered yes, and opened the hatch, where the bailiff entered and acquainted him that he had a writ against him. "Very well," said the delinquent, coolly, "Follow me to Mr. Foote, who will settle it either by paying the money or giving security." The bailiff followed to the passage leading to the stage, behind the boxes, which was very dark, and along which he groped slowly; but Tom, knowing the way, soon got to the door, which had spikes also to it, and bolted it, then crossing the stage, went through Foote's house into Suffolk-street and escaped. He returned when the coast was clear, and was never after off his guard.

Before, however, he set off for Scotland, Foote obtained leave for him from the Chamberlain for the representation of *The Minor* at the Haymarket in which he himself played Mother Cole, and Weston Transfer. This brought him a hundred and eighty pounds, which put him a little upon his legs. But the managers at Drury-lane sent him a demand for upwards of a hundred pounds which he owed them; he took, however, no notice of it, but set out a little sooner for Edinburgh.

His first appearance in the Scottish metropolis was in Sharp, and he was exceedingly well received. In truth, he was considered now the best low comedian the Athenians had ever seen; and at his benefit they proved their regard for him.

In returning to London he played a few nights at York, in some of his celebrated parts. He here met with Dibble Davis, and went with him to Leeds, where they played and had a benefit; and as it was too soon for the Haymarket season, they entered into a scheme of tantaragiging, that is, giving an entertainment consisting of prologues, epilogues, and some detached scenes from plays and farces. By these means they got a few pounds, and returned to London, where, by the interposition of Foote, a reconciliation ensued between him and the Drury Lane managers, and he was engaged at five pounds per week; but one half of the money was stopped to pay the debt he owed them.

An increase of riches caused an increase of demands. His salary at Drury Lane for playing thirty-two weeks was one hundred and ninety-two pounds; this, with his salary at Foote's, and his benefit, being the only person there indulged with one, and also his night at Drury Lane, could not in the whole be estimated at less than six hundred pounds per annum. And yet he was in arrears with both

managers, and the old scores had to be wiped off. He lived, however, as if he received the whole of his salary, and was in consequence always behindhand ; rushing into debt where credit could be had, saving his ready money for pocket service, or where houses had no faith. As an instance of his careless extravagance, he bought a chaise and horse for five-and-twenty pounds, which, when in want of money, he sold for less than seven, and it was the full value, owing to the little care that had been taken of them while in his possession.

Debts were continually on the increase, and the managers of Drury Lane, had more than once released him ; but the frequent repetition of his arrests made them resolve to do so no more. One day, when his name was in the bills, he being seized by a Marshalsea-court officer for a small debt, which the managers refused to have any thing to do with, Tom prevailed with the two officers to go to the play with him, and placed himself in the front of the two-shilling gallery. When the play was to begin, a performer came forward to make an apology for him, as being ill and unable to attend, hoping the audience would accept a substitute. On this Weston got upon the bench, and cried out that it was entirely false ; that he was not ill, that he was ready to do his business upon the stage, but that at present he was in the custody of a couple of bailiffs for a small debt, for which he had sent to the managers in the morning to give security, that he might have his enlargement ; that they had refused, and that he submitted the whole to the consideration of the audience. This trick was successful, the managers sent for him, and the matter was settled.

To prevent any accident of the kind in future, he had apartments in Vinegar-yard, communicating with the theatre ; and as he felt no inconvenience from confinement if he had company, gin and purl he thought specifics for every care. He lay in bed almost twenty hours of the day and night, would talk, drink, and dine in it, and had he not been compelled would perhaps have lain from Monday morning to Saturday night. That night was, however, necessary to him, for he then sallied forth, and by some extravagant prank made up for the other six days of tranquillity. He was more expensive in his eating than in his drinking : gin and purl, with punch and port wine, contented him ; yet he would eat peas at a crown a quart, and green geese the earliest of the season.

His benefit proved a very beneficial one, and enabled him to stop some pretty large gaps ; he then came out of his hiding-place, took a neat house and garden in the street leading up from the bridge at Chelsea, where he lived till about half a year before his death. Here he meant to regulate his affairs decently ; but as he had always before done, he did now,—gave in to excess ; the pot and bottle were ever on his table, and duns at the door.

Though the receipts from Drury Lane and the Haymarket amounted with his benefits to near six hundred pounds per annum, yet he engaged to play at Richmond every Saturday. Here he received the emoluments of a benefit, but he was a loser by the engagement, as he generally with some crony stayed at Richmond till his business called him to town.

During performance he regularly took a dram, and as the servants of the theatre were forbid providing any, he brought it himself. One evening, coming to the house very late, Foote met him just as he entered the stage-door, and after a slight reprimand for his delay, asked him what he had in his hand under his coat. "A bottle of Seltzer's spa-water, which the doctor has ordered me to drink." Foote, suspecting it was gin, insisted upon tasting, and was peremptorily refused; at last his request was granted, and the contents of the bottle were proved to be Hollands. Foote threw it on the ground, broke the bottle, and spilled its contents. Weston swore he would not play that evening unless it was replaced, and the manager was forced to comply or dismiss the house, for Tom remained inflexible.

In the winter he was again obliged to keep close; and once, when sent for to Drury Lane, he returned for an answer, that unless the managers would pay two hundred pounds for him he could not attend the house; and moreover added, that unless some things were compromised immediately, he should want the following week five hundred pounds more to clear his way to the theatre. Notwithstanding this behaviour, Garrick forgave the man for the actor.

His health at last began to decline, but he himself would not believe it; out of four months of the season which had elapsed at the time of his death, he had been only able to perform a few nights. In his illness he was attended by several eminent persons of the faculty, but without hope; all they could do for him only prolonged his life some weeks, and on the 18th of January 1776 he breathed his last. His funeral was conducted respectfully, with a hearse-and-four and two mourning-coaches, and he was laid beside his father and mother.

Within the circle of his acquaintance he was esteemed good-natured even to a fault, and so liberal, that he would share his last shilling,—every thing he had was common to his friend. Though in public company he was not remarkable, yet in private with his companions he was social and gay. He rather chose his acquaintance beneath than above himself; he hated restraint, and therefore seldom mixed where he might reasonably expect to find it; and though he was generally in debt, yet it did not proceed so much from the badness of his principle as the want of economy in the management of his affairs, to which he never properly attended. He may rather be said to have squandered his money than spent it. In fine, if we balance his good qualities with his bad, we shall only say of him as of many more of mankind,—there are better and worse than he was.

As a low comedian he stood unrivalled. On his first attachment to the stage his genius was counteracted by his inclination; the former pointed out to him low comedy, the latter solicited him to pursue tragedy and agreeable rakes in comedy. Foote first discerned his real talents, and judged so critically of the extent of his line of acting, that he wrote the character of Jerry Sneak purposely for him. His walk was, however, very narrow, being that of dry vulgar simplicity, but in this he had no equal on the stage. In his Jerry Sneak, Druggier, Scrub, etc. he exhibited so palpable a simplicity of nature in his person, voice, and manner, that contrary to all other actors,

the longer and more intensely he was seen, the more he seemed to confirm the spectator in the opinion, that he was not an actor but the real person he represented ; at times supporting this delusion in a manner so peculiarly his own, that in those ludicrous distresses which low comedy occasionally affords, he seemed to feel so piteous a pusillanimity, that after the bursts of laughter were over his abjectness almost moved to pity.

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## DAVID GARRICK.

THE players live in a world and atmosphere peculiar to themselves. To read their lives is to become acquainted with a class of beings, not only different from mankind in their affinities and affections, but governed by motives and impulses which have no similarity to the ordinary springs of action in other men. Whether this arises from that constitutional frame of mind which qualifies them for their profession,—to imitate not human beings, but the artificial creations of poetic fancy—or is the result and habitude of thinking the thoughts, and acting the actions of others. is a question not easily answered.

In no instance is the fact of their dissimilarity more manifest than in the life of Garrick. In the records of the stage, and in all the chronicles and traditions of the theatre and the drama, one hears of this accomplished actor as something almost superhuman. Possessed of talents and graces which leave every other kind of human ability in the shade ; a luminary of such lustre as to surpass comparison ; the meteor of an age, in whose presence every star disappeared, and which every eye followed with admiration,—and yet the incidents of his life claim only that homage from posterity which is due to a clever and adroit person. Instead of the paragon of beings which he appeared to his contemporaries, he shrinks into something to which there is hesitation in giving more than the epithet of respectable. But an account of his adventures and career will best illustrate the justness of this posthumous estimate.

David Garrick was born in the city of Hereford, on the 20th February 1716, and baptised on the 28th of the same month. The history of his family does not ascend beyond his grandfather, a gentleman of France, who, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, came with other emigrants to this country, and settled in London. His son Peter, the father of David, obtained a Captain's commission in the army, and married a daughter of the Rev. Mr. Clough, one of the Vicars of Lichfield Cathedral. Captain Garrick being on a recruiting-party at Hereford, and his wife with him, David was there born, in the Angel inn ; an event which seems to have had an influence on his conduct, for he soon after sold his commission, and retired on half-pay to Lichfield, where he continued to reside,

managing his slender income with exemplary economy, and much esteemed among the best families for his pleasing manners and gentlemanly urbanity.

He superintended the education of David with uncommon solicitude, and sent him at ten years of age to the grammar-school, then under the mastership of a Mr. Hunter, so odd a combination of the pedant and sportsman, that it is not stretching conjecture into any excess to say, that his eccentricities had probably some effect in exciting the humour and directing the bias of his celebrated pupil.

David, though universally acknowledged to be a boy of quick and lively talents, was not distinguished for application to his studies ; on the contrary, he was a prankful truant, and study was to him drudgery.

He early discovered a turn for mimicry, which made his company much sought by his school-fellows ; and in this gift his genius for the stage undoubtedly originated. It first showed itself in a passion for the exhibitions of a company of strolling actors who occasionally visited Lichfield. What he so much admired he naturally desired to imitate, and engaged a set of his school-fellows to undertake with him the several parts of a comedy, and thus, in his eleventh year, was the manager of a company. The play was *The Recruiting Officer*, and having drilled his young performers by frequent rehearsals, it was acted before a select audience in 1727. The part which he reserved for himself was Serjeant Kite, in which it is said he displayed great humour and precocious intelligence.

In 1729 or 1730, he was sent to Lisbon, where he had an uncle, a thriving wine-merchant ; but being too young and volatile for a counting-house, he returned in the course of the following year, and was placed by his father again under the tuition of Mr. Hunter : still his sprightliness was superior to his assiduity ; nevertheless he made some progress, desultory it no doubt must have been, and only such as a clever boy would snatch in the haste and hurry of a mind intent on play.

It happened that in the year 1735 the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, a native also of Lichfield, formed a design to open an academy for classical education, and Garrick, at that time turned of eighteen, was consigned to his charge, along with seven or eight other lads, to complete his education. Garrick is said to have commenced his pupilage with earnestness, and to have applied to the classics with a promise of good success : but Johnson grew tired of his undertaking, the employment ill accorded with his reflective genius, and the servile task of inculcating the arid rules of grammar sickened him to disgust. Having struggled with his circumstances for about a year, he resolved to abandon the profession. Garrick, whose activity was becoming adventurous, grew weary of the listlessness of a country town. He longed for a brighter and a busier scene ; and having communicated his longings and aspirations to Johnson, he found him animated with congenial sentiments, and they resolved together on an expedition to the metropolis.

Among other gentlemen in Lichfield with whom Garrick was at this period acquainted, was a Mr. Gilbert Walmsley, Registrar of the

Ecclesiastical Court, a man of erudition, and a warm and generous friend ; he was consulted on the occasion, and his regard for Garrick induced him to write to Mr. Colson, a celebrated mathematician, then master of the school at Rochester, requesting in strong terms that he would take Garrick under his tuition. "He is," said Mr. Walmsley, "a very sensible young man, and a good scholar ; of a sober and good disposition, and as ingenious and promising a young man as ever I knew in my life." Mr. Colson being willing to comply with his friend's request, Garrick and Johnson accordingly set off for London on the 2nd March, 1736-7.

The exodus from their early associates of two young men of genius is an interesting event. The precise object of Garrick's adventure is not mentioned ; but it would seem to have been some vague intention of studying the law, as in the course of the week after his arrival in London, he was entered a student of Lincoln's-inn ; though even then visions of the stage probably floated in his imagination.

On their arrival in London they lost no time in following their intentions. Without friends to help him forward, and without adequate means to maintain him during his studies, it was a blind throw with fortune for Garrick to attempt the law ; it shows, however, that his mind was filled with the idea of making a figure before the public.

To what pursuit he addressed himself after he became a member of Lincoln's-inn is not very clear, but certain it is that he did not then avail himself of Mr. Walmsley's recommendation to Mr. Colson, of Rochester.

About the end of the year his uncle, to whom he had been sent to Lisbon, came to London with the intention of settling, but his design was frustrated by a fit of illness, which in a short time put an end to his days. By will he left Garrick a thousand pounds, who then had recourse to Mr. Colson, and placed himself under that gentleman's instructions until the death of his father, when he entered into partnership with his elder brother as a wine-merchant in the vicinity of the theatres.

It would seem, both from the locality and what the sarcastic Foote said of Garrick, when he had attained the meridian of his glory, that their establishment was not eminent. "I remember Garrick living," said Foote, "in Durham-yard, with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant." The situation of their business was, however, favourable to the cultivation of Garrick's peculiar talents ; a number of clubs were held in the neighbourhood, which the actors frequented, where he was often a guest, and became a distinguished critic on their performances, illustrating his remarks by the display of those talents for mimicry which he early evinced, and which afterwards rendered his personation of Bayes, in *The Rehearsal*, one of the most amusing of exhibitions.

At this period the stage was in a low condition, and the actors were persons of a humble order of life. In tragedy, declamation roared in a stentorian strain ; passion was rant, whining grief, vociferation terror, and drawing the gentle accents and soft sollicita-



tions of love ; the whole character of the drama partook of the same unnatural extravagance. Comedy was a mingled tissue of farce and buffoonery, and tragedy was divorced from Nature. It is true that Macklin was a discriminating performer, and Quin without doubt an actor of great merit, but still the drama was generally sunk to a low ebb ; and the players ascribed, as in later times, the coarseness of their own performances to the corrupted taste of the age ; as if corruption were a voluntary vice, and not the gradual effect of mediocre endowment.

Garrick had now been about three years in London, during which he had studied the stage with the zeal of a votary ; and as the wine business with his brother did not answer the demands of his ambition, he dissolved their partnership, and resolved to try his fortune on the stage.

The remainder of the year he spent in private preparations for the design he had formed. He studied the best characters of Shakspeare with ardour and the intelligence with which genius is ever distinguished in a congenial pursuit, but the more he made himself acquainted with those delicacies and refined inflexions of motive and of character, which make up the life and peculiarities of the great poet's conceptions, his diffidence of himself increased ; he perceived, that to embody them, according to truth and nature, it would be necessary to attempt a new style of acting, to found a new school, greatly different from that with which the public appeared to be satisfied ; and the hazard of this he duly appreciated.

He was at this time acquainted with Giffard,\* then the manager of the theatre in Goodman's-fields, and having consulted him, he was led by his advice to make an experiment of himself in the country. Accordingly, in the summer of 1741, they set out together for Ipswich, where a regular company was then performing ; here an arrangement was made for Garrick, under the name of Lyddal, to appear as Aboan in the tragedy of *Oroonoko* ; in that disguise he passed the Rubicon.

His appearance surprised the audience, and such was his encouraging success, that in a few days he ventured to cast his black complexion, and show himself in the part of Chamont in *The Orphan*.

The applause received in this new character emboldened him to attempt comedy ; and such was the success which crowned his endeavours that not only the inhabitants of Ipswich, but the gentry of the surrounding country, went in crowds to see him,—a proof of good taste in them and of excellence in him.

The merits of an actor should be of such a nature as to be seen at once ; he is no actor whose merits require to be studied in order to be appreciated, nor can he ever expect to reach the highest walk of

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\* One of the Giffards was alive in 1802, in Cornwall, at the rare age of ninety, who not only played with Garrick at Goodman's-fields, but was the Hamlet to Garrick's Osrick at Ipswich. It was conjectured that he was the man who enjoyed the annuity for limited years from Sir Robert Walpole, for whom, it is generally supposed, he wrote the play read by the Minister in the House of Commons in 1737, as the ground-work for the Dramatic Licensing Act.

his profession who is averse to earn his way by hard labour. Of all the endowments of genius,—that rare and peculiar gift which distinguishes the possessors from other men,—the peculiarity of the player and the singer is one that shines at first sight; if the excellence is not eminent on the first appearance, it will never be brilliant afterwards, though patient study may polish mediocrity into respectability.

The success of Garrick at Ipswich decided his destiny: he always spoke of it with pride and gratitude, and often said, had he failed there, it was his fixed resolution to return into private life; it, however, confirmed his predilection, and he performed, to the delight of his audience, not only alike in tragedy and comedy, but even in pantomime, and his agility as Harlequin rivalled his humour and his pathos.

Before the end of the summer he came back to London, resolved, in the course of the winter, to present himself before a metropolitan audience; and, in the mean time, when it is said that he concerted all his measures to gain this point, we must interpret them to mean that he had recourse to those expedients to enhance his celebrity which the players so well know how to employ, and which is, in a special manner, necessary, to obtain a fair consideration in the estimation of the public. But on attempting to procure an engagement at one of the great theatres he had the mortification to be rejected. Fleetwood and Rich, the two managers, regarded him as a mere strolling actor, a pretender, and treated his pretensions even with contumely. How often is the man conscious of possessing qualities calculated to obtain distinction, obliged to submit to repulses of this kind!—How much ought such instances of rejected genius afterwards obtaining renown, to mitigate the arrogance of those who condemn untried worth! Both Rich and Fleetwood had soon cause to rue their rejection of Garrick.

On being repulsed by them he applied to his friend Giffard, and agreed with him to act under his management, at the theatre in Goodman's-fields, for five pounds a week. It cannot be doubted that he felt, in being as it were thus constrained to accept this engagement for such a part of the town, in some degree humiliated; but the consciousness of possessing talents that would shine out at last, in despite of all the mists that obscured his rising, prompted him to exert his best energies. Being determined to wrestle at once with fortune, he chose the part of Richard III. for his first exhibition, and in this great and arduous character he came out on the evening of the 19th of October, 1741.

In all the memoirs of Garrick the effect of his first appearance has certainly been exaggerated, for the amount taken at the door in seven nights was only two hundred and sixteen pounds seven shillings, and yet we are told that the moment he appeared on the stage it was felt by the whole audience as if a new spirit had come among them. The very nature of Richard shone in his countenance, and the extraordinary intensity of visible expression with which it may be said he anticipated the sentiments he uttered, produced the most earnest and vivid sympathy and delight. The astonishment of the

audience was extreme, and something like consternation that such awful power should be only imitation mingled with their pleasure, and heightened their enjoyment to the sublime.

The renown of this performance rung through the town, and the whole metropolis gradually became impatient to see that display of powers which all who had witnessed confessed themselves unable to describe. The theatres of Rich and Fleetwood were deserted,—the fashionables came in troops from all parts of Westminster,—the theatre at Goodman's-fields shone with a splendour not its own,—even Pope, then old, feeble, and querulous, was drawn thither from his grotto at Twickenham, and almost drew new inspiration from the delight he enjoyed,—such was the enthusiasm with which his contemporaries spoke of his early career.

In the course of the season he appeared in a variety of characters, in Lothario, Chamont, and several other parts in comedy, such as Sharp, in his own farce of *The Lying Valet*, Lord Foppington, Captain Plume, and Bayes in *The Rehearsal*.

Growing confident in his powers by such extraordinary success, though Richard III. continued his favourite character, he resolved to attempt the more delicate and perhaps difficult one of Lear. He was moved to attempt this sublime part by an incident in itself exceedingly affecting. He had become acquainted with a man, whom he greatly esteemed, in Leman-street, Goodman's-fields. This old gentleman had an only daughter, about two years old, of whom he was doatingly fond; one day, as he stood at an open window dandling and caressing the child, it suddenly sprung from his arms, and falling into a flagged area was killed on the spot. His mind instantly deserted him,—he stood at the window delirious, wild, and full of woe: the neighbours came flocking to the house, they took up the body and delivered it to him, thinking it might break the spell of his grief; but it had no effect, his senses were fled, and he continued bereft, filling the streets with the most piercing lamentations.

As he was in good circumstances his friends allowed him to remain in his house, under two keepers appointed by Dr. Munro, and Garrick went frequently to see the distracted old man, whose whole time was passed in going to the window, and there fondling in fancy with his child; after seemingly caressing it for some time, he appeared as if he dropped it, and immediately burst into the most heart-piercing cries of anguish and sorrow; then he would sit down with his eyes fixed on one object, at times looking slowly around, as if to implore compassion.

It is said that from this hint Garrick formed his unparalleled scene of the madness of Lear over the body of Cordelia; and certainly it is not easy to determine from what slight analogies genius derives the elements of the things it creates. It should, however, be recollected that the madness of Lear does not spring either from surprise or grief, as in this case; but is the effect of distraction, indignation mingled with sorrow, and disappointment, and remorse. In that exquisite performance, which touched the heart of the spectators with a sympathy more like grief than only sympathy, he had no sudden

starts nor violent gesticulations ; his movements were slow and feeble, misery was in his look, he fearfully moved his head, his eyes were fixed and glittering without speculation ; when he turned to those around him he paused, seemed to be summoning remembrance, and in every sad and demented feature expressed a total alienation of mind.

As a contrast to the pathos of *Lear* he appeared in *Abel Drugger*, and the critics of the day were in doubt in which part he was the greatest master. Hogarth, whose discernment of nature was of the shrewdest perspicacity, said of Garrick, after having seen him in *Richard III.* and *Abel Drugger*, "You are in your element when begrimed with dirt, or up to the elbows in blood."

By this time the managers of Drury Lane and Covent Garden had, in the deserted condition of their houses, begun to repent of their rejection of Garrick, who was now the great Apollo of all the play-going world, whose miracles in Goodman's-fields were attended by an unwearied multitude of worshippers ; and Quin, whom they affected to consider as above all competitors, partaking of the manager's spleen, in addition to his own envy as Garrick brightened in his career, said, "This is the wonder of a day,—Garrick is a new religion ; the people follow him as another Whitfield, but they will soon return to church again."

The joke was relished and spread among the patrons of the players ; but Garrick, when this was reported to him, being then flushed with success, does not appear to have been much disturbed by it, at least, there is no acrimony in the following epigram with which he answered the sarcasm :—

"Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,  
Complains that heresy infests the town ;  
That Whitfield Garrick has misled the age,  
And taints the sound religion of the stage ;  
He says that schism has turned the nation's brain,  
But eyes will open and to church again.  
Thou grand infallible, forbear to roar,  
Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more.  
When doctrines meet with general approbation,  
It is not heresy, but reformation."

In May 1742, he closed the season at Goodman's-fields, after a career of the most brilliant success. His fame was spread far and wide. The managers of the Dublin theatre sent him proposals inviting him to perform for them during the summer months, and he having accepted their terms, set out for Ireland, accompanied by Miss Woffington, about the beginning of June.

Garrick and this accomplished actress appeared together in several comedies, and were received with enthusiasm ; but the people being prepared for him in tragedy, it was in *Richard* and *Lear* that he roused the greatest admiration. The theatre was, on the nights of his performance, crowded with the rank and fashion of Ireland, and the weather being at the time intensely hot, an epidemic rose in every quarter of the town, which dividing the public interest with the player, was called the Garrick fever.

Having completed his engagement, he returned to England with his laurels increased and flourishing, where Fleetwood, convinced that he was no longer a pretender but a man of genius, and afraid that such another campaign as the last at Goodman's-fields would prove a serious injury to his house, opened a negotiation with him. The treaty was soon concluded, a salary of five hundred pounds was agreed upon for the season, the largest ever granted, and Giffard with his wife, at Garrick's suggestion, were also engaged, together with the best performers who had acted with him at Goodman's-fields. This arrangement was soon known, and diffused, according to theatrical exaggeration, universal satisfaction.

This particular engagement is said to have been accepted by Garrick with expressions of more than common pleasure; it gratified his ambition, and was regarded by him as an assurance that he would one day be the manager and proprietor of the theatre. But when it is considered that his chief study had been to acquire a right and just conception of the characters of Shakspeare, it is surprising that the parts in which he appeared, with the exception of Richard and Lear, were of far inferior consequence; at last, however, in the course of the season, he added Hamlet to his list, in which he had made his first appearance in Dublin, and the description of his performance in it, merits to be often repeated.

When he entered the scene, his look spoke the character, a mind weighed down with apprehension and grief. He moved slowly, and when he paused he remained fixed in a melancholy attitude; such was the expression of his countenance, that the spectator could not mistake the sentiment to which he was about to give utterance. The line, "I have that within which passeth show," has been quoted as one of those masterly touches never heard before, but being heard, are never forgotten. In all the shiftings of his feelings, his voice, and even his appearance seemed to change, and when he beheld the ghost, his consternation was such, that the emotion of the spectators on looking at him was scarcely less than if they had actually themselves beheld a spirit. He stood the statue of astonishment, his colour fled, and he spoke in a low, trembling accent, and uttered his questions with the difficulty of extreme dread. It is to be lamented that no description has been preserved of him in the different great scenes of his principal parts, but the testimonies which bear witness to the surprising powers of personation displayed in Hamlet, sufficiently assure us that he was possessed of wonderful ability in assuming the true characteristics of feeling.

It is not my intention to describe the effect of Garrick's acting in all his parts, but only in those great delineations in which the highest histrionic talent has ever attempted to excel. His performance of Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, although not of that class of characters, has always been recalled, in speaking of his ability as a mimic, as one of his most delightful efforts. At the time it was revived by him, the stage really stood in need of the satire, and he judiciously so altered the piece that it suited the follies and temper of the age. The actors had lost, it is said, all judgment; the vicious taste of those who constructed the fustian, and called them-

selves poets, had frightened Nature from the stage ; and to vie with the extravagance of the authors, the best performers thought they could not show their talents enough. They strutted, they mouthed, they bellowed, and propriety was strangled and trodden, in their supernal violence and furor. This was all repugnant to the style of Garrick, and accordingly, in adapting *The Rehearsal* to the stage, and the part of Bayes to himself, he seized each point of the extravagance in his contemporaries which his own taste condemned as absurd. And in consequence, by this part alone, he did wonders for the correction of the public taste ; for whilst the conceit and vanity of Bayes were embodied to the life, the faults of the actors were illustrated with the most admirable mimicry. To display their errors in the most glaring light, he affected to teach the players to speak their speeches in what he called the true theatrical manner—and for illustration, he selected some of the most eminent performers, and imitated their style and habit in the most perfect manner. Although in these imitations he chose the most distinguished players, he yet never attempted Quin. Whether this was out of any awe or sentiment of respect, cannot now be determined, but considering how sharply the veteran had expressed himself against the style of Garrick, there was good taste, from whatever cause arising, in this forbearance.

The following season, 1743-4, opened less auspiciously than the preceding. It appears that Fleetwood, notwithstanding the great success of Garrick, had formed a design to lower the salaries of the principal performers, and with that view communicated his scheme to Macklin, who possessed considerable influence over the mind of Garrick, to induce him probably to accede to the manager's terms. Macklin, however, from some cause or another, broke off from him and joined Garrick, with whom he formed an alliance to withstand the oppression, as it was deemed, of the manager, and if possible, to set up a rival company. The performers flattered themselves that Garrick would have weight enough to obtain a licence for the little theatre in the Haymarket, but the Lord Chamberlain was deaf to their petition. Fleetwood remained inflexible, and the rebels, disappointed in their anticipations, became alarmed for themselves. Their heroism took more the character of common-sense than befitted personages of such high sentiment. They desired Garrick to waive their demands, and to get them restored to their stations in the theatre. Overtures for a general pacification were accordingly made—Fleetwood declared himself willing to receive them all again into grace and favour, with the exception of Macklin, who was excluded from the amnesty.

After the best consideration I have been able to give to all the circumstances of this affair, Garrick seems to have acted as a gentleman, and with liberality. To pacify Fleetwood, who was particularly incensed against Macklin, he offered to play for a hundred guineas less than he received for the former season, if that manager would re-engage Macklin. The offer was made without effect ; but Garrick's concession to Macklin did not end with this attempt—he addressed himself to Rich, the other manager, and prevailed upon him to en-

gage Mrs. Macklin at three pounds a week, and, at the same time, offered to pay Macklin himself six pounds a week until he should become reconciled to the manager.\* In the end, however, hostilities were suspended among the belligerents, and peace was proclaimed, by Garrick being announced to appear in the character of Bayes, on the 6th of December, 1743, but Macklin, stout rebel, still stood out. On the same day a pamphlet was published, entitled, "The case of Charles Macklin, Comedian." Garrick was the principal person attacked in it, and all he could do was to disperse a hand-bill, stating that the pamphlet contained many injurious aspersions, and requesting the public to suspend their judgment till he should have time, in the course of a day or two, to present a fair account of the whole transaction. Nothing, however, could appease the fury of Macklin's friends.

A large party, led by Dr. Barrowby, went in crowds to the play-house; Garrick appeared as announced, but was not suffered to speak. Off, off, resounded from all parts of the house. The play went on in dumb-show to the end, Garrick, during the uproar, standing aloof at the upper end of the stage, to avoid a thorough pelting of savoury missiles seldom used within a theatre. Macklin and his friends were triumphant for that night.

Garrick engaged Guthrie, the historian, to answer the case of Macklin, and with great despatch he drew up a reply, and had an eminent friend in one of the Mr. Wyndhams, of Norfolk, who happened to be an admirer of the athletic art. Having selected thirty of the ablest boxers of the time, Fleetwood admitted them into the theatre by a private passage, before the doors were opened, and they took possession of the middle of the pit.

When the overture was playing, one of the boxers stopped the music, and standing up, said in a loud voice, "Gentlemen, I am told that some persons are here with an intention not to hear the play; I came to hear it; I paid my money to hear it, and I desire that they who came to interrupt it may all withdraw, and not hinder my diversions." This, of course, occasioned a general uproar, but the boxers fell upon Macklin's party, and drove them out of the pit. The battle was thus soon ended, and peace being conquered, Garrick then made his appearance, and went through his part without interruption.

Macklin was, however, only defeated, not subdued. On the 12th of December, 1743, five days after the battle, he published another pamphlet; but the tables were turned with the public, and instead of the ill-used victim, which he supposed himself, they saw but a man of an inflexible temper, intent on his own revengeful purposes, without regard to the consequences which they might entail on others. The quarrel ceased to interest, and the remainder of the season passed in tranquility, and with increasing *éclat* to Garrick.

In January following the Macklin war, Garrick aspired to another

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\* But it may be thought that this was not entirely disinterested, as Macklin probably wished to hold him to their compact.

laurel, and chose *Macbeth*. On this occasion he resolved to revive the play as written by Shakspeare; for, from the time of Sir William Davenant it had been always performed according to his alterations—indeed, so little was the true text then known, especially among the players, that even Quin, when he heard of Garrick's intention, said, "What does he mean? don't I play *Macbeth* as written by Shakspeare?" This was the signal for pens: a paper-war was immediately commenced, and the regenerator was assailed from all quarters; but he took the field with his beaver down, or, in other words, in an anonymous pamphlet, and finally, according to promise, made his appearance.

His performance of this great and difficult part was a master-piece, but not equally excellent throughout. It was more characterised by nature than heroism; and in this conception he perhaps evinced great soundness of judgment and purity of taste—for the situations in which *Macbeth* is placed are so exciting, so full of intense feeling, that any assumed dignity of deportment, or deviation from the simplicity of natural impulse, would have been a blemish. I have heard an authentic anecdote of the manner in which he played the dagger-scene, and the relation of it will serve to afford a tolerably correct idea of his conception and execution of the part. It appears to have been widely different from the celebrated solemnity of John Kemble, and by contemporary accounts, as different too from the restless ecstasy of Quin.

It had happened that the great Lord Mansfield had never seen Garrick's *Macbeth*, and that one day when they met at some country dinner, his Lordship mentioned the circumstance, and said that he understood the dagger-scene was even superior to his meeting with the Ghost in *Hamlet*, entreating Garrick to indulge him with a specimen. Garrick was flattered by the request, and replied that his Lordship was perhaps not aware of the difficulty, for so much of the interest depended on the state of the spectator's mind, produced by the preliminary circumstances of the drama, that it would not be easy to excite any corresponding preparation—"Your Lordship," said he, "cannot but remark the awful supernatural key on which the whole tragedy is constructed. Beings of another sphere and condition than of the earth, have announced their intention to fulfil a fatal destiny on *Macbeth*, and Fate, in the stupendous character of his lady, has prepared for them an unconscious coadjutor of dreadful influence. He has gained great renown, and been adorned with many honours. Duncan, the King, is his guest, and the ties of kindred, and the obligations of hospitality, and above all, loyalty, claim that rather than bear the knife against him, he should cover him with all his shield; yet, in these circumstances, he has resolved to murder him, and the midnight hour and a storm are accessories to his terrible feelings at the moment. Under them he is stalking to the chamber of the King, reflecting on the crisis in which he stands, and pausing at the door, agitated with conflicting emotions, he says, "Is that a dagger,"—"Po, po, Garrick, that's all well enough, but come, show me the scene!" cried his Lordship. Garrick bowed respectfully, and replied, "When does your Lordship



hold the next meeting?" The judge was rebuked, for Garrick was acting the scene.

Before the end of the month in which Garrick appeared as Macbeth, *Regulus*, a tragedy, was produced. The author was a Mr. Havard, the author of *Scanderbeg*, and a tragedy, entitled *Charles I.*, both of that respectable degree of mediocrity which the world, without re-pining, soon forgets. *Regulus* was well received, and the story, familiar to every school-boy, was told with clearness in correct language. Garrick personated the hero, and his energy and sensibility gave sentiment to the piece, which affected the audience with a degree of sympathy inconceivable, when one reads the unpoetical common-places of the composition. The play accomplished its fate. It was laid aside after the eleventh night.

About the end of March, in the same year, another new tragedy was produced, a free translation of Voltaire's *Mahomet*; a drama which many critics of the Continent esteem as of great merit; but, in truth, it is only an ingenious piece of artificial enthusiasm, lacking in the vigour of natural passion. It is a mere play—and is as like the genuine world of man, as painted actors and painted scenes are like its persons and circumstances. The part which Garrick represented was Zaphna, and it received all the exaltation which his genius could confer on insipid verse androdomontade; neither clergymen nor stock-jobbers should lay their mittened hands on the sensibilities of solemn tragedy. Voltaire, we allow, has constructed some pretty dramas in verse, but he never looked into the heart of man. He was by nature a satirist, and never could see aught in the human bosom but selfish purposes and sordid designs.

The season of 1744-5 was that in which Garrick reached the summit of his profession, though he had not then gathered all his glory. He was the Lear, the Richard, the Hamlet, and the Macbeth of Shakspeare, or as nearly so as art can approach to nature; but he had also a strong predilection for comedy, and in this season he extended his walk in that line.

At this time the modest star of Thomson, the delightful author of "The Seasons," was beginning to peer above the theatrical horizon, and he ventured to bring forward his tragedy of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, a composition full of beauties in the closet, but actionless upon the stage. The rules which Pope has given in his "Epistle to Lord Burlington," on gardening, were never more applicable than to this tender and pleasing poet—

No pleasing intricacies intervene,  
No artful wildness to perplex the scene;  
Grove nods to grove, each alley has a brother,  
And half the platform just reflects the other—

for Thomson's forte was not dramatic; even his elegant power of allusion, which renders "The Seasons" at once the sweetest and the most refined poem in the language, is scarcely perceptible in his dramas.

Mrs. Cibber played Sigismunda to Garrick's Tancred, and with

two such performers the piece could not, with the author's beautiful verse, be otherwise than successful.

After Thomson's play, Garrick appeared in *Othello*, in which he had made an attempt before ; but after the best consideration I have been able to give to all the different accounts of this performance, it must, I fear, be pronounced a failure. Garrick, however, continued to repeat the part occasionally, but it never was with him a favourite, and as he advanced in life, he retired gradually from it, until he performed it no more.

It would be a curious speculation to attempt to determine the cause of Garrick's failure in *Othello*, for a failure it must be considered, as compared with his transcendancy in other parts. In the just and natural inflexion of the voice, accordant to the feeling and passion to be expressed, we have no cause to doubt that he was equally excellent. The probability therefore is that he failed in the expression of the countenance alone, and that this default and shortcoming to expectation was entirely owing to the black disguise he was obliged to assume. But why is *Othello* always performed as if he had been a negro ? It is true that Shakspeare makes him spoken of as such, and yet he was only a Moor—dark, doubtless, but not much darker than the Spaniard ; a blackamoor, undoubtedly meant a negro—and the very name, arising from the intervention of the *a* between the adjective and the substantive, shows that it was intended only for the blacks, there being in the sound a something which resembles the accent of the negroes.

The season of 1745-6, was remarkable in the life of Garrick, as well as in the history of the kingdom. Theatricals were dull in London, and the celebrated Lord Chesterfield, the wit among Lords, being Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and keeping a gayer court than that of the Sovereign himself, Garrick went to Dublin, and performed there with Sheridan, the father of the author of the *School of Scandal*.

A short time before Garrick's arrival with Sheridan in London, Spranger Barry had made his first appearance. He came out in *Othello* with transcendent lustre, and his success, as compared with Garrick in that part, was so extraordinary, as to inspire all who witnessed his performance with unbounded admiration. It is due, however, to the generosity of Garrick's disposition, to mention that no one was louder in their approbation of Barry's performance than himself.

By the time Garrick returned from Ireland, in May 1746, Rich, the Covent-Garden manager, who had rejected him with disdain, was convinced, by his success, that he was a great performer, and anxious to engage him, offered most advantageous terms. As a farther inducement he proposed to open his theatre, which was then shut, for six nights, and to divide with him the profits. The offer was embraced, and Garrick played his capital parts : he was thus secured for the winter to Covent Garden.

That winter proved the most flourishing which Covent Garden had ever known. Quin, Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, Wood, Ryan, and Chapman, formed the most effective company ever

assembled; certainly not at all inferior to that golden age of the drama which saw Booth, Wilks, and Cibber in the same scene. It was during this season that Garrick and Quin appeared less as rivals than as reciprocal competitors, doing their best to obtain public favour. They frequently acted together in the same play. In *Jane Shore* Quin was Gloucester, and Garrick Lord Hastings; and in the first part of *Henry IV.* Garrick played Hotspur, to give new attractions to Quin's Sir John Falstaff, one of the most perfect impersonations which the stage has ever exhibited. This generous contention interested the public, and with the fashionable world Covent Garden was the rival of the Opera.

Garrick had already twice attempted dramatic composition in two farces, *Lethe* and *The Lying Valet*,\* both of which, particularly the latter, may be said to be still in favourable possession of the stage. In this year, January 1747, he produced *Miss in her Teens*, a farce, calculated to afford much amusement, though it is not often played. The fable is well imagined, the incidents spring naturally out of one another, with frequent unexpected turns, but which never violate the rules of probability. It, however, must be confessed, that as it turned more on fashion than on manners, it is one of those plays which require an adaptation to every new age. Garrick, in the mincing and missy character of Fribble, is said to have been exceedingly comic.

In the February following, the play of *The Suspicious Husband*, a commendable, heavy affair, such as might have been expected from a clever, worldly clergyman, was brought out. It has but still wit; but the scenes and equivoques are managed with skill, and it is occasionally performed. Garrick's part in it was Ranger, and he acquitted himself with great spirit throughout the whole piece. The play, however, has been regularly sinking into oblivion since his time.

The season closed at the usual time, after a spring tide of success. Garrick and Quin never played better, and throughout it all they had no difference; Garrick allowed his senior rival the applause due to him, and always spoke of his Falstaff as the perfection of acting. He admired Quin's vein of natural humour, and delighted in repeating his roughest and most sarcastic jokes. The following story is one of the many he delighted to tell.

Quin engaged a party of friends to sup at the Crown and Anchor. Garrick was of the number; at a late hour the guests made their escape from more wine. Quin having, or pretending to have, some business to settle with Garrick, detained him after the rest were gone. When they were ready to leave the tavern, a shower came down in such a deluge that they could not think of stirring. No hackney-coach was on the stand: two chairs were ordered: the

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\* Garrick was but little scrupulous in making use of the ideas of others. *The Lying Valet* was taken from *The Lass with Speech*, an unpublished play by Cunningham the poet, who was himself a player. He dedicated his poems to Garrick, who sent him two guineas on the occasion, which he returned, begging that they might be added to the theatrical fund.

waiter reported that only one could be found. Garrick proposed that Quin should go first, and he would wait till the chair returned. "Poh! that is standing on ceremony," said Quin; "we can go together." "Together? impossible!" "Impossible! nothing more easy," replied Quin; "I will go in the chair, and you can go in the lantern." Quin was a portly personage and David a manikin; but the humour of the story consisted in the spirit of the telling it. It is the misfortune of all good things, especially those of the players, which depend on manner, seldom to interest, on repeating, by any other party than the first relater.

About this time an incident occurred which had a great effect on the fortunes of Garrick. A banking-house, which had purchased Drury Lane theatre from Fleetwood, was under the necessity of stopping payment. The patent was at that time a grant from the Crown for twenty-one years, and had only a few to run. Lacy obtained a promise from the Duke of Grafton, then Lord Chamberlain, that if he purchased, he should have in due time a renewal of the patent. The preliminaries being settled, Lacy, in order to ensure success to his undertaking, invited Garrick to join him in the speculation. Garrick jumped at the bait: the dream of his ambition was in his power to be realized—his friends assisted him to accept the offer, and accordingly he was enabled to advance eight thousand pounds, and to reach the goal of his hopes. In the month of April 1747 an agreement was completed between them.

The two managers opened the theatre on the 15th of September 1747, with a strong company, of which Barry was a member. Garrick spoke a prologue on the occasion, written by his early friend and fellow-adventurer, Dr. Samuel Johnson, not unworthy of his sonorous pen; and Mrs. Woffington delivered an epilogue, the composition of Garrick himself.

In January 1748, Garrick, who had studied the part of Jaffier, in Otway's *Venice Preserved*, brought out that tragedy, with the advantage of Quin in Pierre; but he falling ill, it was undertaken by Barry, who did not equal him in the character. Jaffier was more suitable to his powers; nevertheless, the play as it was performed was considered a masterly exhibition.

Garrick then brought out the comedy of *The Foundling*, to which he wrote the epilogue; he also revised *Roméo and Juliet*, in which Barry played Romeo, but he took himself no part in it; he likewise revived *Much Ado about Nothing*, and played Benedict to Mrs. Prichard's Beatrice, in which both parties received the greatest applause. It was in this year also that Garrick brought out *Irene*, the tragedy which his friend Johnson brought in his pocket to make his fortune, when they left Lichfield together, a work of superior literary merit. Full justice was done to it in the performance by the best strength of the company, but it was sustained by perseverance only nine nights, and then laid on the shelf.

To the friendship of Garrick for the author, the acceptance of the play for representation can alone be ascribed, for it is impossible to conceive that he could be insensible to its deficiency in dramatic merit, or so dazzled with the mere verbal sonance of the language,

as to suppose it alone would charm an audience for an entire evening. Dramatic poetry was not, indeed, the forte of Johnson's genius. An acute perception of moral beauty was his chief attribute, and if in that he was eminent, certain it is he has had his full share of respect. Johnson was, in fact, one of those characters who are regarded with esteem by mankind, more from an opinion of what they are capable of doing than for what they do.

It was also in this season, so busy in novelties, that Aaron Hill's translation of Voltaire's *Merope* was brought out, a tragedy which partook in no inconsiderable degree of that pomp of phraseology which the audience felt so ponderous in *Irene*; but the incidents are striking, and with the help of Garrick and Mrs. Cibber, it proved most successful on representation.

Garrick was now thriving; his management of the theatre was judicious; good taste and excellent sense appeared in all he undertook. Nature had gifted him with talents, and these were applied to their proper use with that skill and industry which deserved and gained success. Under these circumstances he resolved to marry, and Mrs. Woffington, who had long lived with him, was said to have been so far the object of his first choice, that she herself declared he had tried a wedding-ring on her finger. We are, however, inclined to question the story, for the simple reason that Garrick was so evidently intent through life to raise himself in society, that it seems improbable, notwithstanding the example of similar things happening to men of equal reputation for prudence. But whatever may have been his intention, it was not carried into effect. The beautiful Violette, a dancer of supreme excellence, a native of Vienna, who took that Italian name, attracted his affections; she was patronized by Lord and Lady Burlington, who on her marriage-day presented her with a casket of jewels and six thousand pounds, a gift so munificent that it confirmed a rumour which was then in vogue that she was the natural daughter of the Earl.

With what assiduity Garrick may have guarded and cultivated his own fame, he was undoubtedly a man not over jealous of merit in others; on the contrary, it may be justly said, that he had pleasure in bringing forward rival talent, as if conscious that it was only by competition with great merit that his own superiority could be best shown. The entire season which he performed with Quin without a difference was honourable to his temper and liberality; and in the next season a new instance of what may really be called his magnanimity was displayed in bringing out *Othello*, in which he had not met with complete success, and in giving the part to Barry, while he himself took the character of Iago. In the course of the same year he also brought out *Edward the Black Prince*, by William Shirley, a spiritless imitation of the manner of Shakspeare.

In the following February (1750), he brought out Whitehead's tragedy of *The Roman Father*, a composition in which the style and fable are both equally refined and classical. Garrick, who excelled in the parts of aged men, played the principal character, and the piece was admired and applauded on the stage, while the critics bore testimony to the beauty and purity of its literary merits in the closet.

All had hitherto gone prosperously with the dramatic monarch ; but players as well as men are destined to suffer change, and to know the stings of vicissitude. Quin, who was on the pinnacle of greatness at Covent Garden, began to scowl at the flourishing fortunes of his rival, and, like other potentates, thought in envious pride only of war : accordingly, by all the arts of theatric diplomacy, he availed himself of some petty discontents, which were discerned in the phalanx of Drury Lane, and in the end induced Barry and Mrs. Prichard to revolt. This defection was followed by that of Mrs. Wollington, so long the bosom friend of Garrick. But our hero met the shaking of his fortunes courageously ; he composed his manifesto in the shape of a prologue, more remarkable for its fitness than its felicity. The campaign was opened with *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Mrs. Bellamy played the heroine and Garrick the lover ; Barry and Mrs. Cibber in the same parts, shone glorious on the boards of Covent Garden, and the battle raged for twelve nights with undiminished bravery : which was to win was still the question, when the town grew tired of the contest, and Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, deemed it expedient to change the play. Garrick thus remained master of the field, having played it thirteen nights. This war gave rise to the following playful epigram in allusion to the story of the play :—

“ What play to-night ? ” says angry Ned,  
As from his bed he rouses ;

“ Romeo again ! ” he shakes his head,  
“ A plague on both your houses ! ”

Garrick soon afterwards revived Congreve’s tragedy of *The Mourning Bride*, a drama that without petulance may be said to owe much of its fame to a single passage, which, though fine in itself, is indebted for its celebrity to an extravagant eulogium of Dr. Johnson—it is the description of the interior of a cathedral :—

“ Now all is hush’d, and still as death,—’tis dreadful !  
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,  
To bear aloft its arch’d and ponderous roof,  
Looking tranquility. It strikes an awe  
And terror to my aching sight ; the tombs  
And monumental caves of death look cold,  
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.”

Hitherto I have only spoken of Garrick’s professional merit, and of those parts in which he was allowed to excel all his competitors ; but besides his superiority as a player, and his general accomplishments as a gentleman, he is entitled to no small degree of praise for his endeavours to introduce a more various and intellectual character into our recreations. He used to say, according to Murphy, that a good play was the roast-beef of Old England ; and that song and gaudy decorations were the horse-radish round the dish. The remark had perhaps some pungency in it, but it did not enter so deeply into his opinions as to restrict him from attempting to rival Rich of Covent Garden in his own way. Accordingly, in the course

of the Christmas holidays, in 1750, he brought out a splendid pantomime, entitled *Queen Mab*, which as Bayes says in *The Rehearsal*, contained every thing that could elevate and surprise. But the life of Garrick, during the period in which he was the manager of Drury Lane theatre, comprehends the history of the English stage, and to enter into any consecutive relation of the plays he either introduced or revived, or the different endeavours of his management to cater for the recreation of the public, would require larger dimensions than the nature of this work affords. But although in all that related to the public entertainments in which he bore a part, he will ever be considered as eminently successful, it yet must not be supposed that he was universally so, or that envy was to him less faithful in her attendance than to others who rise above the ordinary standard of their contemporaries. In the period which elapsed between his first pantomime and the year 1756, his career, both as a manager and performer, may be said to have been consistent and uniform; the stage was well conducted, and the exhibitions were universally allowed to be in general far beyond mediocrity. But in that season the state of politics among the people was unfavourable to some of Garrick's designs for enlarging the dominion of the theatre.

During the summer of 1755, he had planned several schemes for the entertainment of the town, and among other means for giving them effect, invited a distinguished dancer to perform in a ballet which he had splendidly conceived. This artist, as he was called, was a Monsieur Noverre, who arrived in London with a band of no less than a hundred other performers, and immediately began to make preparations for his corps to exhibit. But they became the object of the malice and ridicule of all the wits about town. The indignation of the lower orders was kindled, that such a number of Frenchmen, as they call all foreigners, should be brought among them. Still Garrick thought that this patriotic prejudice might be allayed, and as the King, George II. had never seen him act, he so contrived it, that on the night when the dancers were to make their first appearance, his Majesty was induced to command his own performance of Richard III. But when the tragedy was over and the dancers entered, no respect was paid to the royal presence, all in the theatre was noise, tumult, and commotion. The King was amazed at the uproar, but being told that it was because the people hated the French, he smiled and withdrew. On that occasion, a gentleman, one of the most celebrated wits of the time, who had been in attendance on his Majesty, went afterwards to the green-room, and Garrick, anxious to know how the King had been pleased, inquired what his Majesty thought of Richard: "I can say nothing on that head," replied the courtier, "but when the actor told Richard,—'The Mayor of London comes to greet you,' the King roused himself, and when Taswell entered, buffooning the splendid annual, his Majesty said, 'Duke of Grafton, I like dat Lord Mayor;' and when the scene was over his Majesty exclaimed again, 'Duke of Grafton, dat is a good Lord Mayor;' and when Richard was in Bosworthfield, roaring for a horse, his Majesty said, 'Duke of Grafton, will dat Lord Mayor not come again?'"

In the mean time the riot in the house was going on, and in the end, after three or four nights were successively tried to procure attention, the poor dancers were fairly driven from the stage, and the interior of the theatre, as in similar affairs when John Bull is in wrath, was defaced and the decorations demolished.

At this epoch, when Garrick was attempting to introduce the Continental ballet on the English stage, it ought not to be forgotten that he did not show his wonted acumen in judging of the legitimate drama. He rejected Home's tragedy of *Douglas*, one of the few performances which still retain, both in representation and reading, "all their original brightness." His life, however, continued to afford few incidents for biography; it was prosperous and pleasant, and flowed in the same even tenour for many years; but about the beginning of 1763 another riot took place, in consequence of an attempt of the manager to introduce a new regulation, by which, during the run of a new play, no half-price was to be admitted. The audience gained their cause, but the incident deserves more particular notice as an instance of the good sense with which Garrick for so many years managed Drury Lane. On the second night of the riot, the malevoli, as they were called, returned to the charge, and summoned the manager to appear before them. As soon as he came on their leader stood up, and, to the astonishment of all his friends, said to Garrick, "Will you, or will you not allow admittance at half-price after the third act of every piece, except a new pantomime during its run in the first winter?" Garrick, with the most disarming suavity, complied with the request, and the rioters were triumphant. But it must be acknowledged that John Bull did not on this occasion show all his wonted generosity and love of justice; for during the disturbance on the preceding night, Moody, one of the actors, arrested one of the malevoli in the act of setting fire to the scenery. This material service was deemed an offence which required an apology. Moody was vehemently called for, and on his appearance his turbulent judges in the pit ordered him to ask pardon, to which, with great presence of mind, he answered, "Gentlemen, if by hindering the house from being burnt to the ground, and saving many of your lives, I have given you cause of displeasure, I ask your pardon." This their high mightinesses deemed an aggravation, and they commanded him to implore pardon on his knees; but Moody replied with energy, "Gentlemen, I will not degrade myself so low, even in your opinion; by such an act I should be an abject wretch unfit ever to appear before you again." He then made his bow and walked off the stage, and Garrick received him with open arms. The riot now assumed a new character; the manager was again obliged to appear, and being ordered to dismiss Moody for his insolence, he assured them that Moody, though he was a useful actor, should not perform on his stage so long as he remained under their displeasure. He then retired, and once more embracing Moody, assured him that his salary should be regularly continued.

On the next night the confederates were determined to renew the contest at Covent Garden theatre. The manager there refused to



submit to their dictation, and the interior of the house was instantly laid in ruins. Redress at law was solicited on the ringleaders, and Lord Mansfield so impressively delineated at once their folly and guilt, that they were ashamed of themselves; Covent Garden was thus left at liberty to proceed according to the new regulation, but Garrick was obliged to submit to his capitulation.

The last new part in which Garrick appeared, was Sir Anthony Bramville, in Mrs. Sheridan's sentimental comedy called *The Discovery*, which was brought out in 1763. The play itself has considerable merit, and in this character, a solemn coxcomb of antiquated manners, he displayed a whimsical humour that added more interest to the piece than has been since his time discernible in it. He went on, however, repeating his favourite parts, and closed the season with apparent composure; but the humiliations\* of the riots, and other incidental anxieties, preyed upon his heart in secret, and he was advised both on his own account and the health of Mrs. Garrick, to go abroad, and accordingly, on the 15th of September 1763, he set out for Dover.

Health, and the dissipation of his chagrin, led him to proceed, without material interruption, to the baths of Padua, which proved medicinal to Mrs. Garrick, and the change of scene, as well as the novelty of the amusements in which he participated, essentially contributed to the restoration of himself. But he was sometimes disconcerted—perhaps as often diverted, by the hauteur with which, as a player, he was treated by the Italian nobility; the English travellers, however, whom he met with, always evinced towards him the greatest respect. The Duke of Parma was, however, an exception, to the general pride affected by the Italians, and Garrick was several times invited before him to display “the glory of his art.” But the scene with the celebrated Mademoiselle Clairon, on his return, at Paris, was one of the most brilliant of these favourite exhibitions, considering the talents of the performers, ever witnessed.

A large party were assembled, and at the request of the company, Clairon and Garrick consented to exhibit specimens of their theatrical talents. The contest between them lasted some time, with great animation on both sides. It was however remarked, that the French gave the preference to Garrick; with equal politeness, the English applauded Clairon; but Garrick perceiving that his admirers were unacquainted with the English language, he was induced to exhibit in action the grief and delirium of the old gentleman who dropped his child in fondling it, and whose madness became the model of his own in *Lear*. The influence of the representation on the company was astonishment, succeeded by tears; and Clairon, in a transport of admiration, caught him in her arms and kissed him.

After about a year and a half's absence, Garrick returned to London, to the universal delight of the play-going world; and the King

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\* One of the nights when Garrick and Mrs. Cibber played, the cash receipts of Drury Lane amounted to no more than three pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence.

honoured his first re-appearance with his presence. The joy of the audience on this occasion was not expressed by the usual clapping of hands and the clattering of sticks, but in loud shouts and huzzas. It was remarked, by those who best appreciated his abilities, that by visiting foreign theatres he had greatly profited. His action, always spirited and proper, had become easier, his deportment more graceful, his manner more polished, and that the whole style of his acting was improved.

Some short time after his return Dr. Goldsmith applied to Garrick with his comedy of *The Good-natured Man*. He had early attacked the player, when he was very young, and Garrick remembered the unprovoked malice afterwards, it is alleged, by declining the play; other and more commendable reasons have been assigned, but it cannot be questioned that the original injury of the Doctor's satire was recollected, and when a reason of so much importance to a spoiled child of the public can be discovered, it is unnecessary to look for a mere professional cause. However, in time they became mutually reconciled: he even went so far, though he did not act in his comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*, to present the Doctor with a humorous prologue, and secured himself a niche in that beautiful temple of *Retaliation* which Goldsmith constructed over the members of the famous Literary Club.

Among other devices which occurred in the mind of Garrick for the augmentation of his fame and fortune, the Jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon, in honour of Shakspeare, ought not to be forgotten; no author ever better merited such a celebration than the poet; but the sober habits of the people, and the precarious temper of the climate, I fear, must ever procure for the idea of such a fête the epithet of preposterous.

Garrick afterwards brought the Jubilee to Drury Lane theatre, where it was performed for nearly a hundred nights; but the memorials which have been preserved of the representation do not reflect much honour on the taste of the public, and justly exposed Garrick to some degree of ridicule.

Among other critics of whom the representation of the Stratford Jubilee, in the winter of 1770, stirred the gall, was Foote, a man naturally of an envious disposition, and who, from some unknown prejudice, is said to have secretly cherished an antipathy to Garrick. His spleen vented itself in a scheme for a burlesque imitation of the pageant, in which a character, made as like Garrick as possible, was to be introduced. Foote, however, being under personal obligations, was by the interference of a nobleman, who patronized them both, persuaded to forego his satire.

By the death of Mr. Lacy, in 1773, joint patentee of Drury Lane, the whole management of the theatre devolved on Garrick. But he was now far advanced in life, approaching three-score, and was afflicted with chronic disorders. His friends, considering the increase of anxieties, were in consequence induced to advise him to retire from the stage, but he did not immediately adopt their advice. When, however, it could no longer be wisely withstood, he distinguished his retirement by an act of

munificence that ought to be inscribed on his monument. Having, from his return in 1765, taken an active interest in promoting the Theatrical Fund, which had been established during his absence on the Continent, he, on the 18th of May 1774, produced to an assemblage of the players, called together in the Green-room of Drury Lane, satisfactory proofs of what he had done for the Fund, and in January 1776, the committee, by his advice, was induced to apply for an Act of Incorporation; all the costs and charges of this act he defrayed himself, and on the 10th of June in that year, when he took his leave of the stage, in the part of Don Felix in *The Wonder*, he bestowed on the Fund the monies received at that final appearance. Soon after, he sold his interest in the patent of the theatre for the sum of thirty-five thousand pounds.

His theatrical career being now over, I may be permitted to offer a short estimate of his life and character; a task the more delightful, for if as a player he had no equal, he was a man distinguished for many virtues and accomplishments.

Mr. Garrick was small in stature, but handsomely formed, and his deportment was graceful, easy, and engaging. His complexion was dark, but his countenance was enlivened with black eyes, of singular brilliancy. His voice was distinct, melodious, and commanding, and possessed an inexhaustible compass, or rather seemed to do so, for he managed it with such appropriate discretion that it was never heard pitched beyond his power.

It would be unfair towards the character of this great artist, to say that he was never excelled. In some parts others have surpassed him, but all his contemporaries agree that he beggared competition in those characters for which he was most celebrated; and that he never performed any part without impressing his audience with admiration. In every department of the drama he did not exceed all his rivals; but there were characters in which he had none, and in which he gave the passion with the fidelity of Nature, and the regularity and beauty of consummate art.

His talents as an author were not of the first class; but he possessed, in many of his compositions, an ease and grace of no ordinary kind; and had he not been the glory of the stage, he would have in consequence commanded the respect of posterity for the magnitude and variety of his works as an author, in which capacity, however, he has been praised too much. The farce of *High Life below Stairs* has been ascribed to him, and printed with his works, but it is the production of his friend, the Rev. James Townley,\* to

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\* The merits of Townley are not generally known: he was born in London in 1715, and received his education at Merchant-Tailors' school, from whence he was elected to St. John's College, Oxford. Soon after taking orders, he was chosen morning preacher at Lincoln's-Inn chapel, and lecturer at St. Dunstan's in the East. In 1740, he married Miss Jane Bommin, of Windsor, descended from the Poynz family, and related to the late Dowager Lady Spencer, through whose patronage he obtained the living of St. Bennett, Gracechurch Street, London. He afterwards became Grammar-master to Christ's Hospital, and in 1759 was chosen high master of Merchant-Tailors' school, in which office he died in 1778. He held from his friend Garrick the valuable vicarage of Hendon. His

whom he was indebted for other occasional literary assistance. The same gentleman wrote the comedy of *False Concord*, which, I believe, has never been printed, and was only once performed. In the sketch of the Life of King, will be seen some curious notices respecting it, and how Garrick and Colman nearly quarrelled: *The Claudestine Marriage*, there is reason to suspect, was founded on *False Concord*.

Garrick was, however, independent of his professional reputation, an eminent man; the papers which he has bequeathed to posterity evince the general excellence of his private conduct, and the universal regard in which he was himself held; poets and philosophers, artists and statesmen, worth and virtue, thronged, if I may say so, to the altar of his numerous merits; and posterity has few similar examples of the warmth with which contemporaries may regard talent, equal to the reverence paid to David Garrick. He was, in his profession, a splendid example of what judicious behaviour combined with genius may attain, for he reaped renown and riches. To the general world he afforded also a cheering incentive; the proud eminence to which he raised himself was generally acknowledged as his proper place, and the blemishes that envy and malice attempted to fasten on him were only as insignificant as the stains of the insects on the alabaster of his statue. He was in every thing distinguished; and though in those manifestations of ability in which he was undoubtedly greatest, we have only the testimony of the aged, yet their record is inscribed with a warmth and energy which compels us to confess that he deserved

situation, as a teacher, seems to have been the only cause of his concealment as a dramatic author. *High Life below Stairs* was produced as early as 1759, and still delights. In 1764, *False Concord* was produced at the benefit of his friend Woodford, and next year, under the auspices of Colman, his farce of *The Tutor* was also performed. *False Concord* contains in Lord Lavender, Mr. Suds, a rich soap-boiler, and a pert valet, the originals of Lord Ogleby, Mr. Sterling, and Brush of *The Claudestine Marriage*, by Garrick and Colman, first performed in 1767. On the authority of Mr. Roberdeau, the son-in-law of Townley, it is stated that part of the dialogue is nearly verbatim. Being long acquainted with the family of Mr. Roberdeau, I have endeavoured to procure, without success, the Manuscript of *False Concord*. Whether it exists among any other members of Mr. Townley's family is doubtful. His merits, however, were not confined to his dramatic works; he assisted Dr. Morell in Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, and was distinguished as an admired preacher.

The following *jeu d'esprit*, written by Mr. Shepherd, a jeweller in London, father, I believe, of Sir Samuel Shepherd, late Chief Baron of Scotland, was occasioned by Mr. Townley having been presented with an early cast of the seal representing the profile of Garrick contemplating the mask of Shakspeare.

Soon as this packet you unfold,  
Methinks I hear you say,  
How's this? my Garrick set in gold?  
Declare the reason, pray!  
Thus, then, to free myself from blame,  
The reason I reveal;  
His head deserves a golden frame,  
Your hand a golden seal.

Since the above was written, I have had some reason to fear that the dramatic sketches of Townley were voluntarily destroyed a short time ago, and that *False Concord* was among them.

all the applause that embalms his memory. In him talent and good sense were elegantly united, and if it be acknowledged that he was of the highest order of genius in the mimic scene, it must also be conceded that he was eminent for many shining virtues as a man.

From the evening on which he quitted the stage he was respected as an opulent private gentleman; but he did not altogether forego his ability to delight. In the same season he was put into the commission of the peace, but he was not known to have ever acted in the character of a justice: the trust, however, was a becoming compliment; he had earned it by the correctness of his own conduct, and by the fortune which that conduct had insured to him. A chronic disease, however, deprived him of the capacity of enjoying the comfort and happiness which he had hoped would attend his retirement; and on the 20th of January 1779 he breathed his last, at his house on the Adelphi-terrace, and was interred on the 1st of February following with great funeral pomp in Westminster Abbey, where a splendid monument has since been erected to his memory.

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### SAMUEL FOOTE.

SAMUEL FOOTE was a native of Truro, where he was born about the year 1720. As his father was a respectable country gentleman and a magistrate of the county, he must be regarded as in point of birth considerably superior to the players in general.

He was educated at Worcester, and by his quickness gave an early promise of future talent. He was indeed, as he said himself, the *father* of many good things when but a mere *child*. His singular talent for mimicry is said to have been unfolded by the following accident.

Being at his father's during the Christmas holidays, a man in the parish had been charged with a bastard child, which excited some conversation in the family. Sam, then a boy between eleven and twelve, remarked, "I forsee how this business will end, as well as what the justices will say upon it."

"Ay," said his father; "well, Sam, let us hear it."

Upon this he dressed up his face in a strong caricature likeness of one of their neighbours, a justice of the peace and thus proceeded:—

"‘Hem! hem! here’s a fine job of work broke out indeed! a feller begetting bastards under our very noses, (and let me tell you, good people, a common labouring rascal, too,) when our taxes are so great, and our poor rates so high; why, ’tis an abomination; we shall not have an honest servant maid in the neighbourhood, and the whole parish will swarm with bastards: therefore, I say, let him be fined for his pranks very severely; and if the rascal has not money, (as indeed how should he have it?) or can’t find security, (as indeed how should such a feller find security?) let him be clapped up in prison till he find it!’"

“The other justice will be milder.

“ ‘Well, well, brother, this is not a new case ; bastards have been begotten before now, and bastards will be begotten to the end of the chapter ; therefore, though the man has committed a crime—and indeed, I must say, a crime that holds out a very bad example to a neighbourhood like this—yet let us not ruin the poor fellow for this one fault ; he may do better and mend his life ; therefore let him be obliged to provide for the child according to the best of his abilities, giving two honest neighbours as a security for the payment.’ ”

This waggish performance greatly amused all present : but Mr. Foote inquired why he was omitted, and with the rest of the company requested Sam to proceed, who, after some persuasion, said, like his father.—

“ ‘Why, upon my word, in respect to this here business, to be sure it is rather an awkward affair ; and to be sure it ought not to be ; that is to say, the justices of the peace should not suffer such things to be done with impunity : however, on the whole, I am of the opinion of my brother on the right, which is, that the man should pay according to his circumstances, and be admonished—I say admonished—not to commit such a flagrant offence for the future.’ ”

In this Sam acquitted himself to the infinite amusement of the company, and imitated the plain matter-of-fact manner of his father so well, that the old gentleman was much diverted, and rewarded him for his humour.

From the school he passed with *éclat* to Worcester College, Oxford, and was put under the care of Dr. Gower, the then Provost, a fit subject for his wit and humour, and soon, in consequence, an object of his tricks. The church belonging to the college fronted the side of a lane, into which cattle were sometimes turned during the night, and from the steeple hung the bell-rope very low in the middle of the outside porch. Foote, one night, slyly tied a wisp of hay to the rope as a bait for the cows, and one of them, after smelling the hay instantly seized on it, and tugging, made the bell ring to the astonishment of the whole parish. The trick was several times repeated.

Such a phenomenon must be investigated for the honour of Oxford and philosophy, and accordingly the Provost with the Sexton agreed to sit up one night, and on the first alarm to run out and drag the culprit to punishment. They waited in the church shuddering for the signal : at last the bell began to toll—forth they sallied in the dark. The sexton was the first in the attack : he cried out “It is a gentleman commoner, for I have him by the gown.” The Doctor, who at the same moment caught the cow by the horn, replied, “No, no, you blockhead, ’tis the postman, and here I have hold of him by his horn.” Lights, however, being brought, the true character of the offender was discovered, and the laugh of the town was turned upon Dr. Gower.

When Foote was enjoined to learn certain tasks in consequence of his idleness, he used to come with a large folio dictionary under his arm, and repeat his lessons and then the Doctor would give him several wholesome lectures on the dangers of idleness. In this lecture he usually made use of many hard words and quaint phrases.

at which the other would immediately interrupt him, and after begging pardon with great formality, would take the dictionary from under his arm, and affect to search up the word, would then pretend he had found it, and say "Very well, Sir ; now please to go on."

On leaving College, Foote entered himself of the Temple ; but the study of the law was ill suited to his character. He, however, continued in chambers several years, during which he set no limits to his prodigal expenditure, and what extravagance in living spared of his fortune, the gaming-table soon after devoured.

In January 1741 he married a gentlewoman of Worcester, with the approbation of their respective friends, but it was not a happy union. They had no children, and her dispositions, though gentle and affectionate, were not congenial to his volatile humour. It does not, however, appear, that any particular disagreement caused them to suffer other afflictions than those arising from his thoughtlessness, and she died before age came to incite distaste.

A curious circumstance is related in connexion with his marriage. He and his wife were invited by his father to spend a month with him in Cornwall ; when, very much to their surprise, on the first night as they were going to bed, they were entertained with a concert of music, seemingly under their window, executed in the most melodious manner. This lasted about twenty minutes. Next morning, on complimenting his father for his gallantry, the old gentleman absolutely denied all knowledge of the affair, and doubted the possibility of its having occurred. The young couple were, however, positive as to what they had heard, and our hero was so impressed by it, that he made a memorandum of the time, which afterwards turned out to be the very night that his uncle, Sir John Dineley Goodere, was murdered by his brother.

Foote always asserted the fact of this occurrence with a most striking gravity of belief, though he could not account for it. One day being asked whether he ought not to attribute it to a supernatural cause ? He replied, "No, I never could bring my mind to that ; but this I can tell you, it has made an impression upon me, that if I once thought so, I would not be out of a convent a single day longer."

A story of this kind baffles conjecture, but the coincidence with the murder was calculated to rivet it upon the remembrance, especially as the chronicles of guilt have recorded few cases which exceed in atrocity that foul and barbarous crime.

A disagreement had arisen between the two brothers, which induced Sir John to cut off the entail of his estates, and settle them on his sister's (Mrs. Foote) family. This widened the breach, and the brothers in consequence had not spoken to each other for several years. Matters were in this state, when the two brothers Captain Goodere and the Baronet accidentally arrived at Bristol ; Sir John upon a party of pleasure, and Samuel as commander of his Majesty's ship the *Ruby*, then lying in King's Road. The latter hearing that Sir John was to dine at the house of a mutual friend on the Sunday following, requested to be admitted as a guest in order to reconcile himself to his brother. Their friend readily acceded to this proposal,

and on the day appointed introduced the two brothers to each other, who were soon seemingly reconciled. But all this on the part of Captain Goodere was only a prelude to the most savage transaction. Captain Goodere went away first in the evening, but scarcely had Sir John soon after left the house, when passing College Green, a band of ruffians belonging to the *Ruby* and a privateer then in the river, with his brother at their head, suddenly seized upon him and hurried him away with the utmost violence to a boat which was in attendance, and thence on board the *Ruby*, the Captain assisting all the while, covering Sir John with a cloak to deaden his cries.

When they had got him into the purser's cabin, the Captain, by promises of reward and promotion, prevailed on two of the ruffians to strangle him ; but the details of this bloody work are too horrible to be described without a special cause. Owing to the awkwardness of the murderers, arising from their own compunction, and the struggles of their victim, they were above half an hour in accomplishing their crime.

Next morning the circumstance of a gentleman being hurried over College Green by ruffians, and the cries of murder being repeatedly heard, induced the gentleman, at whose house the brothers had dined, to make some inquiry : the crime was detected, and the Captain with the two murderers were seized, tried, and executed. By this event Mrs. Foote, the mother of our hero, deriving under the will of her brother Sir John, became heiress to his estates.

The father died soon after the marriage of Sam, but the mother lived to the extreme age of eighty-four, through various fortunes. It seems to have been from her that our hero inherited many of his eccentricities. Her manners and conversation were of the same cast—witty, humorous, and social, and she was always a delightful companion, though her remarks sometimes rather strayed beyond the limits of becoming mirth ; and in her personal appearance she greatly resembled her facetious son : she resembled him also in her character, for she squandered without care, and was often in difficulty. Under one of her temporary embarrassments she wrote to him the following laconic epistle, which with his answer affords an amusing specimen of their likeness to each other.

“DEAR SAM,

“I am in prison for debt ; come and assist your loving mother,  
“E. FOOTE.”

“DEAR MOTHER,

“So am I ; which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son,

“SAM FOOTE.”

“P.S. I have sent my attorney to assist you ; in the mean time let us hope for better days.”

But to return to his wedded life. Mrs. Foote his wife was so much kept in the back-ground by the gay eccentric life her lord led, that little is known of her history except that she was the very reverse of him. Mildness and forbearance were the leading features



of her character ; but these qualities were no check upon his temper. She, however, bore her part in his troubles with exemplary fidelity. Once, when an old friend was in town, not long after Foote's marriage, he intended to pay him a visit, but was surprised to find he was then in the Fleet prison. Thither he hastened directly, and found him in a two-pair of stairs back room, with furniture every way suitable to such an apartment. Shocked at this circumstance, he began to condole with Foote, when the wit cut him short by turning the whole into railery. The stranger, while he was speaking, perceived something stir behind him in the bed ; upon which he got up, and said he would call another time. "No, no," said Foote, "sit down, 'tis nothing but my foot." "Your foot ! well, I want no apologies, I shall call another time." "I tell you again 'tis nothing but my FOOT, and to convince you of its being no more, it shall speak to you directly." Upon this poor Mrs. Foote put her head from under the bed-clothes, and made many apologies for her situation.

This connexion on his part was certainly not endearing, and at one time he resolved to make her more comfortable, as he said, by parting with her ; but after a separation of some months his friends remonstrated with him for such undeserved treatment, and he consented to take her back. But without inquiring into her particular character, he undoubtedly never treated her as he ought to have done, although he had no cause to disparage her homely virtues.

It was soon after the embarrassments consequent on his marriage and imprudence that he was induced to think of the stage ; but he became an author before an actor, and his first effort in that way partook of the habitual carelessness which so materially affected the colour of his life. It was a narrative of the murder of his uncle, in which he undertook the defence of the fratricide. It is true that when he undertook this he was a very young man, and had just outrun his fortune. In these distressed circumstances, without trade or profession, he was solicited by a bookseller in the Old Bailey, with ten pounds in hand and ten more on the sale reaching a stipulated extent, to write upon this subject, then the popular story of the day.

While engaged on this task an anecdote is told of him, one of the most characteristic I have ever met with. On carrying his manuscript to his bookseller he was in such necessitous circumstances that he was actually obliged to wear his boots without stockings, and on receiving his ten pounds he stopped at a hosier's to repair this defect. He had scarcely issued from the shop when he was met by two or three of his old college friends, who had just arrived in London on a frolic, and he agreed to dine with them at the Bedford together. As it was his maxim that rigid economy was the most mortifying thing next to absolute want, he perhaps thought, in joining this party, of only losing the memory of his recent privations in a little conviviality.

While the wine and good-humour circulated, one of his companions observing his boots, cried out, "Why, hey, Foote, how is this ? you seem to have no stockings on." "No," replied the other,

instantly recollecting himself, "I never wear any at this time of the year, till I am going to dress for the evening; and you see I am always provided with a pair for the occasion," and he pulled out the pair he had in his pocket, white silk ones, and silenced the laugh of his friends, and prevented their suspicion of his poverty. It is, however, chiefly his professional life that I proposed to give, and it is not very germane to the matter to minutely describe his literary career. But it is by these anecdotes sufficiently obvious that his case did not differ much from that of others, in betaking himself to the stage to obtain a livelihood, though blind to the peculiarities by which he was destined to acquire his celebrity.

His first appearance was at the Haymarket Theatre, on the 6th of February, 1744, in the character of Othello, under the directions of Macklin; but in this part, though much cheered by his numerous friends, his *début* was not deserving of particular applause. Macklin, who was the Iago of the night, said it was little better than a total failure. His friends, in consequence, advised him to try comedy, and he came forth with no more success as Lord Foppington. In a word, he found the legitimate walk of the actor not the course he should pursue, and accordingly struck out a new path for himself, by appearing in the double character of author and performer, and opened the Haymarket Theatre in the spring of 1747, with a new piece of his own writing, called the *The Diversions of the Morning*.

This entertainment resembled in many respects the kind of monologues which have been so much the delight of our own age by the admirable tact and humour of Mathews. Foote at the time and during his whole life had the peculiar zest of personal mimicry, but Mathews has gone a step farther, by performing alone different imaginary characters in the same manner that Foote imitated the peculiarities of well-known persons.

The success of Foote in this novel species of entertainment excited the jealousy of the great theatres; complaints were made as if he had really immorally violated the law; constables were employed to dismiss his audience, and for a time his career was arrested. But as Mathews holds his "at Homes," Foote invited the public "TO TEA," and his invitation was accepted with avidity.

The conception of this entertainment did credit to his eccentric taste and talent. While the audience were sitting wondering what it would be, the manager came forward, and after making his bow, acquainted them "That as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, whilst tea was getting ready, proceed with his instructions before them;" and he then commenced a series of ludicrous imitations of the players, who, one and all, became exceedingly exasperated against him, but their anger only served to make him more visited. Few amusements were ever so popular.

Next year he produced a piece of the same kind, which he called *The Auction of Pictures*, in which he introduced several town characters then well known. I refer, however, to his works, with a wish that a key were attached to them, for the originals in the course of a short time will be forgotten.

About the close of 1748 Foote had a considerable fortune left him by a relation, which enabled him once more to resume the congenial dissipation of a man of fashion ; and after glittering a short time about town, he went over to Paris, and returned from the Continent in 1752, though he did not make his appearance in public till the subsequent year. He had not, however, wasted all his time in dissipation while abroad, for he brought with him a comedy, in two acts, called *Taste*, a composition which exhibited both his acumen and peculiarities.

About 1755 Murphy began to appear upon the town as a critic and dramatic writer, and being in close intimacy with Foote, wrote a piece called *The Englishman returned from Paris*. This he communicated to him, which the other so much approved of, that he secretly intended to make it his own, and accordingly setting to work on Murphy's materials, soon finished a farce on the same plan, and with the same title, so rapidly that he brought it out at Covent Garden Theatre in February 1756.

This dishonourable trick surprised Murphy beyond measure. But what could he do ? Foote was a man to be only laughed at or with through life ; and accordingly Murphy took no other notice of it, than by publishing his own piece a few months afterwards and inserting in the passage where some doubt is suggested as to the identity of Sir Charles Buck from Paris, a reply from Sir Charles—"Oh, yes, I grant you there has been an impostor about town, who, with much easy familiarity and assurance, has stolen my writings, and not only treacherously robbed me, but impudently dared to assume my very name even to my face : I am the true Sir Charles Buck, I can assure you." Foote's is, however, a better farce, and richer in a greater variety of characters ; but as he was born without shame, he only exulted and laughed at the success of his roguery.

In 1757, he brought out *The Author*, a work, like all his other productions, dependent on the ability displayed in giving it effect by personal imitations. It acquired considerable celebrity by the freedom it was conceived he had taken, in the character of Cadwallader, with a Mr. Aprice, a man of fortune, and one of Foote's own friends. This farce was frequently performed before Mr. Aprice was aware that the caricature was of himself, and he had often laughed at it in common with the audience ; at last the public applied it to him, and he was exceedingly annoyed wherever he went at being saluted as "Cadwallader," insomuch that, unable to withstand ridicule, he solicited the Lord Chamberlain to prohibit the performance, which was granted. But the peculiarities of Cadwallader, or rather of Mr. Aprice, were very much like some of Foote's own, who certainly was not less proud of the antiquity of his pedigree. On an occasion, soon after the publication of *The Author*, his friends played him an arch trick upon this foible. As they were laughing at persons piquing themselves on their descent, one of them slyly observed that, however people might laugh at family, he believed there never was a man well descended who was not proud of it. Foote, snapping the bait, replied, "No doubt, no doubt ; for instance, now, though I trust I may be considered far from a vain man, yet, being descended

from as ancient a family as any in Cornwall, I am not a little proud of it, as, indeed, you shall see I may be ;” and accordingly ordered a servant to bring the genealogical tree of the family, which he began to elucidate with all the absurdity that he so felicitously ridiculed in Cadwallader.

Next year he visited Dublin with Tate Wilkinson—a mimic, in the opinion of Garrick, not inferior to Foote himself—and, with the assistance of his companion, performed with great *éclat*. One night, Wilkinson ventured to imitate Foote himself, and the audience cried out “Foote outdone ;” he did not, however, think so, but complimented Wilkinson, when the play was over, on his general success, saying he was welcome to make free with him, as the mimic mimicked was certainly fair game, but, as his friend, he would tell him that he thought *his part* the worst imitation of the whole ; indeed, so bad, that he was afraid it would damn the reputation of the rest.

During Foote’s stay in Dublin he was much caressed ; both for his talents as a dramatic writer and a gentleman possessed of extraordinary wit and pleasantry. On returning to London, Garrick engaged him, with Wilkinson, at Drury Lane, where their peculiar abilities were attended with extraordinary profit and applause—but the poor players, the chief subjects of their mimicry, were greatly annoyed. One of them, Parsons, even suffered so much from the manner in which he was imitated, that he took to his bed in illness under the mortification.

But although the success of Foote, both as an author and an actor, was greatly productive, no income could keep pace with his expenditure, and he was, in consequence, ever in difficulty. He generally kept a town and a country house, a chariot, horses, and servants, and with a table mostly occupied with persons of the first distinction for rank and wit.

In consequence of this hospitable squandering, early in 1759, finding himself beset with duns, to raise the wind, he made a trip to Scotland, and for the expenses on the road he was obliged to borrow a hundred pounds from Garrick. The trip, however, turned out profitable, and he was well received by the gentry of Edinburgh as well as by the public in general. The Scots, nevertheless, did not escape his sarcasm. At a gentleman’s table in the country, an old lady being called upon for a toast, gave *Charles the Third*. “Of Spain, Madam,” said Foote. “No, Sir,” cried the lady, with some pettishness, “of England.”—“Never mind her,” said one of the company, “she is one of our old folks who have not got rid of their political prejudices.”—“Oh, dear Sir, make no apology,” cried Foote, “I was prepared for all this ; as, from your living so far north, I suppose none of you have yet heard of the Revolution.”

The following winter he again went to Dublin, where he brought out his afterwards greatly-celebrated play of *The Minor* ; of which, on the night it was first represented, the reception was but cool, and the piece was subsequently withdrawn, for that season. Altogether, this excursion to Dublin fell short of what he had hoped, and he returned to London with his purse far from being replenished ; but, without alterations, he brought out *The Minor* there, and it proved eminently successful.

In 1761 he became reconciled to Murphy, and during the summer they obtained permission to open Drury Lane together, which they did with Murphy's comedy of *All in the Wrong*. This summer speculation, however, did not realize the expectations of the partners. In January following, he brought out at Covent Garden Theatre a comedy in three acts, *The Liar*; afterwards, in the following summer, another piece, *The Orators*, the design of which was to expose the prevailing passion for oratory—the affair of the supposed Cock-lane ghost, and the Debating Society held at the Robin Hood.

In the performing of the latter, some real characters were to be sacrificed, and among others the renowned Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was said to have been a willing believer in the ghost. But this intention coming to the Doctor's ears, he employed a friend to buy for him a stout oak cudgel, and at the same time caused it to be made known, both to the author and the public, that he intended “to plant himself in the front of the stage-box on the first night of representation, and if any buffoon attempted to take him off, or treat him with any degree of personal ridicule, to spring forward on the stage, knock him down in the face of the audience, and then appeal to their common feelings and protection.”

This rough declaration frightened Aristophanes; but considering that Dr. Johnson was in the habit of enjoying the satirist's imitations of others, in justice, he would not have had much to complain of had he been a little laughed at himself. He was a coarse, unamiable person, and his peculiarities and affectations were such, that if the public mimicry of private individuals can be justified, the surly sage was as good a subject as any other. But although the Doctor was alarmed at the idea of being introduced on the stage, his criticisms on the character and talents of Foote are the most judicious that were given. “He is not a good mimic,” said the Doctor; “but he has art, a fertility and variety of images, and is not deficient in reading. He has knowledge enough to fill up his part: then he has great range for his wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest: and he is sometimes mighty coarse.”

It being observed to him that Foote had a singular talent of exhibiting character, the Doctor replied, “No, Sir; it is not a talent, it is a vice; it is what others abstain from.”

At another time Dr. Johnson, in speaking of his abilities, said, “I don't think Foote a good mimic. His imitations are not like: he gives you something different from himself, without going into other people. He cannot take off any person, except he is strongly marked. He is like a painter who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who, therefore, is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, Foote can hop upon one leg; but he has not a nice discrimination of character. He is, however, upon the whole, very entertaining, with a particular species of conversation, between art and buffoonery. I am afraid, however, Foote has no principle. He is at times neither governed by good manners nor discretion, and very little by affection. But for a broad laugh (and here the Doctor would himself gruffly smile at the recollection of it) I must confess, the scoundrel has no fellow.”

"The first time," said the Doctor on another occasion, "I ever was in company with Foote, I was resolved not to be pleased—and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting for a long time not to mind him; but the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back on my chair, and fairly laugh it out with the rest: there was no avoiding it—the fellow was irresistible."

In 1763, Foote produced his celebrated farce of *The Mayor of Garratt*; a bold, spirited caricature, possessing the rare merit of being so judiciously pitched, if the expression may be allowed, and so harmoniously sustained throughout, that, although greatly overcharged, it still seems exceedingly natural. But, like that of all Foote's satires, which were either of personal characteristics, or of particular fashions, the raciness of its original flavour has evaporated, and the change that has since come upon manners and customs has made it now, not only obsolete but absurd.

The approbation with which this piece was received was such, that the receipts mended his fortune and his expensive habits revived. He repaired both his town and country houses, extended his hospitalities, and actually laid out £1200 on a service of plate. When reminded by one of his friends of this extravagance, he replied, that he acted from a principle of economy; for as he knew he could never keep his gold, he prudently laid out his money in silver. In this year he reconciled himself to Tate Wilkinson, whom, on his return from Edinburgh, he had treated rather scurvily, and for five years there had, in consequence, been no intercourse between them. Their reconciliation was, however, sincere, and continued uninterrupted till the death of Foote. At the time of this reconciliation, the attractive powers of the friends were reinforced by enlisting Weston, an actor of the legitimate blood, and possessed of talents, especially in comic simplicity, of the most extraordinary kind.

In 1764, strengthened by Wilkinson and Weston, Foote took the field with his comedy of *The Patron*, in which, though he did not so cleverly hit the taste of the town, as in some of his other works, he has yet placed both his judgment and knowledge of human nature in a very conspicuous light, and good critics have estimated its merits as at least equal to those of his best compositions. It had not, however, the charm of personal imitations. In the subsequent summer, he produced the comedy of *The Commissary*, the satire of which fell in with public opinion, and in consequence, although not seasoned with personalities, was greatly relished.

In 1766, by being thrown from his horse, one of his legs was broken in two places, in such a manner as to require amputation; a misfortune which, however dangerous at the time, and inconvenient afterwards, did not ultimately much affect his talent for amusing the million; and he bore the operation, not only with fortitude, but even with jocularity.

In one respect, this accident was productive of good-fortune. It happened in the presence of the Duke of York, the brother of George III. who did every thing in his power to alleviate its conse-

quences ; and among other good offices, obtained for him a royal patent to erect a theatre in Westminster, with a privilege of exhibiting dramatic pieces there, from the 14th of May to the 14th of September, during his natural life ; under which Foote immediately purchased the Haymarket Theatre, which hitherto he had only rented.

In 1768, while his genius was in the brightest glow, his fatal propensity to gaming overcame him at Bath on his way to Ireland, and he lost all his money, about seventeen hundred pounds, and was in consequence obliged to borrow as much as would defray the expenses of his journey. But Fortune, though she could not keep up with him, was ever at his heels, and the success of his Dublin excursion at that time indemnified him for the losses of his Bath adventure. His dilapidated finances being thus repaired, he returned to London in 1769, and resumed his professional avocations.

Towards the close of the dramatic season of that year, the public attention, having at the time no other object, was greatly engrossed by a proposal to celebrate the birth and genius of Shakspeare, by a jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon, an account of which ought to hold a distinguished place in the annals of the Drama. It originated in consequence of a clergyman, (who had purchased a property in Stratford, including the house and grounds where Shakspeare had resided,) cutting down a remarkable mulberry-tree which had been planted by the poet's own hands, and which was regarded by the inhabitants of the town with a kind of religious veneration.

The rumour of this sacrilege roused the whole community—not the extinction of the vestal fire at Rome, nor the stealing of the Trojan palladium, produced a greater sensation. The inhabitants of Stratford, men, women, and children, gathered round the house in successive crowds ; dogs stood sullen, and cats wrung their hands ; and when they beheld the fallen tree, they were almost moved to sacrifice the offender. The tumult was, in fact, prodigious, considering the occasion, and the culprit was obliged to fly the town at once ; and the inhabitants came to a resolution “ never to admit any of the same family, or even of the same name, to reside among them.” It is not said how long this civic taste lasted.

The mulberry-tree was instantly purchased, cut up, and retailed as sacred relics, as stand-dishes, tea-chests, medallions. I have myself a tobacco-pipe stopper thereof. Of these, the Corporation of Stratford secured the best part ; and in a box made of this wood they inclosed the freedom of the town to Garrick, as the great illustrator of the bard's conceptions. This flattering compliment suggested to him the idea of a jubilee, and the proposal met with universal approbation. All summer jaunts ; all trips to watering-places ; all fêtes at home ; all engagements from abroad, were for a time suspended. Young and old, the halt and the lame—even the blind—went to see the miraculous lion of the jubilee. Foote was of course in the throng, and took every occasion, in squibs and sarcasms, to arraign Garrick's taste and judgment in the whole affair, and, indeed, nothing could be more magnificently ridiculous. But his spleen took a more acrid character when he discovered that Garrick, at the

theatre, intended to turn a penny out of it ; accordingly he beset him, both in company and by the public papers, with all the force of his satire, and raised a chorus of laughter against him.

Owing to the wetness of the weather, the concern at Stratford had proved a sad dripping and dabbled-in-the-dirt affair ; but the exhibition of it which Garrick got up in Drury Lane Theatre, was such a capital hit, that Foote was maddened by its success, and in his ire resolved to bring out a mock procession, and introduce Garrick himself on the stage as the principal figure. A man was to be dressed to resemble the grand manager, in the character of steward of the jubilee, with his wand, white gloves, and the mulberry-tree medalion of Shakspeare hanging at his breast, while some droll was to address him in the well-known lines of the jubilee laureate—

“ A nation's taste depends on you ;  
Perhaps a nation's virtues too ! ”

to which the counterfeit Garrick was to make no other answer, but clap his arms like the wings of a cock, and cry out—

“ Cock a doodle-doo ! ”

Garrick himself had early intelligence of the scheme, and was as if he had come skinless from the knife of Spagnoletto. He writhed in misery, and all his laurels withered on his brow, until he became such a pitiful object that the friends of the parties deemed it necessary to interfere. It was in consequence so contrived that the mimic and the manager met, as if by accident, at the house of a nobleman, a common friend. When alighting at the same time from their chariots at his Lordship's door, Garrick at once saw the object for which they were brought together, and after exchanging significant looks, Garrick broke silence by asking, “ Is it war or peace ? ” — “ Oh ! peace, by all means,” replied Foote, with much apparent good-humour. Thus John Bull was frustrated of his fun, and their old seeming friendship was restored.

The new piece with which Foote amused the public in 1770 was the comedy of *The Lame Lover* ; but as the chief amusement of this piece depends on the performers, critics have not esteemed its literary merits, though these are great, as at all equal to many of his other productions. This was followed by the comedy of *The Maid of Bath*, founded on circumstances well known at the time, and composed in a spirit of better-natured pleasantry than often visited the writing-table of the author.

Soon after, at the conclusion of the season, he was again invited to winter in Edinburgh, and accordingly prepared for the journey, which he commenced in October 1771, and stayed in Scotland till the March following. But the novelty of his performances having now abated, his trip was not so gratifying as when he went to Edinburgh before.

When he went to London, he was excited by a general outcry, which had been raised against several of the members of the East India Company, who, from small beginnings, had raised immense



fortunes in a short period. These new men, from the extent of their purses and extravagance, not only ousted many of the old families from their seats in Parliament, but erected superb mansions about the country, and blazed in all the pomp of Oriental splendour. Foote laid hold of the popular disgust at this overweening greatness, and composed *The Nabob*, to ridicule the ostentatious pretensions that had proved so offensive to the ancient feelings of the nation. By this production the East Indians were inflamed against him, and two gentlemen, who had held high situations in India, undertook personally to chastise him. They accordingly furnished themselves with cudgels, and sallied forth to his house in Suffolk-street. On their arrival they sent up their names, and Foote received them in his drawing-room with that address and politeness which no one better knew how and when to practise. This had an immediate effect; instead of attacking him with their sticks, they began to remonstrate, by stating the insult which particular persons of character and fortune had sustained by the licentiousness of his pen, and for no other reason than because Providence had favoured their industry and enterprise.

They were proceeding in this strain, warming in wrath, when Foote, gently interrupting them, requested they would but hear him one word—which was to beg they would only state their grievances with temper till he made his justification, and then, if they were not fully satisfied, he was willing to meet every consequence.

The gentlemen then resumed, and when they had finished, Foote began by assuring them, in the most solemn manner, that he had no particular person in view as the hero of his comedy; that he took up his story from popular report; and that as he was by trade a wholesale character-monger, he thought he was perfectly secure from giving offence to individuals, particularly to the honourable part of the East India Company's servants, by satirizing in a general way those who had acted otherwise. He followed up this apology by taking his comedy and explaining to them, so much to their satisfaction, that it was only a general satire on the unworthy part of the nabob gentry, that his visitors took coffee and stayed with him to dinner, delighted with his wit and the conviviality of his other guests. Peace, by their account of the visit, was thus restored between Foote and the India corps. Perhaps we have few instances of personal manners having, in similar circumstances such a decided effect. The conduct of Foote was admirable, but the world, we suspect will not have much admiration to spare either for the understanding or address of the Oriental champions.

Till 1775, our hero was actively employed in his professional affairs, writing, acting, and travelling; but in that year, having, in *The Trip to Calais*, ridiculed, under the name of Lady Kitty Crocodile, the eccentric Duchess of Kingston, he incurred the anger of that resolute and vindictive dame, who rallied her friends and obtained the interdict of the Lord Chamberlain on the performance of the piece. A correspondence, in consequence, arose between the Duchess and Foote, which, however amusing it may have been in the gossiping of the time, has no other merit now than what may proceed from seeing

how much a lady could throw off all delicacy, and a gentleman descend to scurrility.

Next year he altered the prohibited play, and brought it out under the title of *The Capuchin*, a comedy which, though as a whole certainly not of a high order, yet possesses scenes which, for terseness of language and shrewdness of remark, have not their equals out of the works of Shakspeare. The individual against whom the satire was chiefly levelled was a Dr. Jackson, the editor of a newspaper and the bosom friend of the Duchess; but the revenge which this unprincipled person attempted to take was so diabolical, both as respects the charge and the satanic zeal and constancy with which it was for a time supported, that it can only be alluded to. The result, however, was according to the conviction of Foote's friends; but the agitation he had suffered withered his talents, and, conscious of the shock his frame had sustained, he immediately began to prepare for the consequences. On the 16th of January 1777, he disposed of his property in the Haymarket Theatre to George Colman, for a clear annuity of sixteen hundred pounds, payable quarterly, together with a specific sum for the right of acting his unpublished pieces.

According to this arrangement, the theatre, under the management of Colman, was opened in the May following, and a few nights afterwards Foote came on, as a performer only, in his own comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks*; but when he appeared on the stage, the whole audience were grieved at the blight which had evidently fallen upon him: his cheeks were wan and meagre, his eyes had lost their wonted intelligence, and his whole person appeared blasted. He rallied, however, a little in the course of the evening; but the public seemed to accept his services rather in remembrance of what he had been, than for what he then was. This visible decay soon after obliged him to relinquish the stage, and he spent the remainder of the season at Brighton, where having in some degree recovered his spirits, he was advised by his physicians to try the South of France. With this intent, he reached Dover on the 20th October, on his way to Calais. The wind proving unfavourable on that day, he was in consequence detained; but his spirits rallied, and among other whimsical sallies in which he indulged, one of them is humorous, and characteristic of the man.

On going into the kitchen to order a particular dish for dinner, the cook, understanding he was about to embark for France, began to say that, for her part, she was never out of her own country. "Why, Cookey," said Foote, "that's very extraordinary, as they tell me above-stairs that you have been several times all over Grease (Greece)."—"They may say what they please," replied the Cook, "but I was never ten miles from Dover in all my life."—"Nay," said Foote, "that must be a fib, for I have seen you myself at Spit-head:" a sally which amused all the servants in the kitchen, in whose laughter he heartily joined, and gave them a crown to drink his health and a good voyage.

This, however, was but the last blaze in the socket, for next morning he was seized with a shivering fit at breakfast, and he was put to bed. Another succeeded, which lasted three hours. He then

seemed composed, and inclined to sleep ; but soon began to breathe low, and at last, with a deep sigh, expired, on the 21st of October 1777, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. The body was removed to London, where it was, in the course of a short time, interred in Westminster Abbey by torch-light—an awful and reverential ceremony.

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### CHARLES MACKLIN.

THEY are not always the greatest men whose lives and adventures best deserve to be recorded ; those only who have met with remarkable events, and encountered in the course of their fortunes accidents different from the ordinary tenour of human affairs, are worthy of the honour. In some respects Macklin was of this description ; he was not so eminent in his profession as to be entitled to the distinction he claimed, and which he in a great measure obtained, but still his life was greatly an exception to the biography of others. Charles M'Laughlin, (for so he was really called,) was descended from the Irish clan of that name. Macklin himself used to say, that they considered themselves as the descendants of the ancient kings of Ireland, and that, in his time, to maintain the memory of their alliance to royalty, the chief once a year held a solemn court, to which all the kin of the clan repaired.

“I have myself been once at this royal meeting,” he sometimes said, “and could not help being exceedingly impressed with the ceremony of my introduction to our chief, who, as a relation, received me most graciously.” This may all be true, but the early part of Macklin's life is involved in obscurity. In a brief memoir I have of him, the title-page and the date of which are lost, it is stated that a late Irish judge has been frequently heard to declare, that he remembered him in Trinity College, Dublin, where he used to attend in the menial capacity of an errand-boy. But it is also reported, that at the siege of Londonderry he had three uncles within the walls and three without, who respectively distinguished themselves for King James and King William with great bravery.

The report during his life is, that he was born in the last year of the seventeenth century, but the prevalent opinion would say he was older ; and there is a story that instead of 1699 he was born in 1690, and that his taking off nine years of his real age was to conciliate the affections of a theatrical mistress who was then under twenty. But there are better evidences than opinions with respect to the period of his birth. In 1750 there was a woman then living, a first-cousin of Macklin's mother, and who resided with her at the time of his birth ; this woman always said that Charles Macklin was two months old at the battle of the Boyne, July 1, 1690, and this was partly confirmed by a strolling player of the name of Ware, who was living in London about the year 1784, and was then eighty-two years of age ; he remembered Macklin a full-grown man when he

was a boy, and that for his love of rioting and other dissipations he was then called "Wicked Charley," and "The Wild Irishman." It does not appear, however, that the question is of any importance, but Macklin himself always equivocated respecting his age, and his conduct as regards it was enigmatical.

His earliest recollection of himself was when a boy of six or seven years of age, living on a small farm with his parents. His father was a Presbyterian, and his mother a Papist; but in every other respect save that of religion they lived happily together. In their neighbourhood, a widow lady, a near relation of the Besborough family, resided, who took a partiality for young Macklin, and while he was under her protection the tragedy of *The Orphan* was got up during the Christmas holidays, and the part of Monimia was assigned to him, which he performed with great applause: an incident which probably determined his future profession.

At the age of fourteen he was bound an apprentice to a saddler, but his notions of life were of a higher scope, he soon escaped from his trade, and travelled up to Dublin on foot. How he managed to exist there he never told, but the story of the Irish judge comes partly in to explain it, and it was as humbly as could well be; all he himself ever acknowledged was that after being some time in the metropolis he got settled as a badgeman in Trinity College.

About the year 1725 he first came to London, and was engaged at the Lincoln's-inn theatre. The character he first appeared in was that of Alcander in *Ædipus*, in which he spoke with so little of the tragic cadence then in fashion that the manager was not satisfied. "I spoke so familiarly," he used to say, "and so little in the hoity-toity tone of the tragedy of that day, that the manager told me I had better go to grass for another year or two. Macklin took his advice, and joined a strolling company in Wales.

Previously to his going into Wales he spent some months with a son of the Dublin manager, who was of a dissipated turn, and who, being well acquainted with the town, introduced him into many scenes of profligacy. One night, at the gaming-table, Macklin won above four hundred pounds, and with this sum he and his companion, attended by two ladies of the town, went down to the immaculate borough of St. Alban's to enjoy for a few days the pleasures of the country. Their adventures there remind us of Miss Scraggs, in Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," so renowned for her taste in Shakspeare and the musical-glasses. One night they went to a public ball, and being dressed expensively were at first much noticed, but one of the ladies getting into a dispute about precedence in the country-dance, her language and temper betrayed her profession, and both she and her companion were in consequence quickly handed out of the room, and the gentlemen politely desired to follow them.

His rambles to Wales and Bristol afterwards were such as might naturally be expected to happen to a wild young fellow who was never troubled with diffidence. While at the latter place he paid great attention to the daughter of a gentleman, who agreed to receive his visits in the dark, and left one of the windows of her father's parlours unbolted that he might get the more easily in.

Unfortunately for the player, he had that night to perform Hamlet and Harlequin, which made him late. On his setting out, too, a heavy shower drenched him to the skin, and, to complete the climax of misfortunes, just as he had raised the sash and was stepping in, he overbalanced a large china jar full of water, which made such a noise as to alarm the family. Miss heard the uproar and was the first down to see what was the matter, when she advised him to make the best of his way out of the house, and was obeyed. Reflection then got the better of the lady's love, for she never afterwards spoke to him.

I have not been able to glean much of Macklin's adventures till he appeared permanently on the London boards, on the 18th of September 1730, but he was in the metropolis undoubtedly when *The Beggar's Opera* was brought out in 1728, and being present at the first representation, confirmed what has been often said, that its success was doubtful till after the opening of the second act, when, after the chorus "Let us take the road," the applause became universal and unbounded. In the scene where Peachum and Lockit are described settling their accounts, in which Lockit sings,

"When you censure the age," &c.

the whole audience turned their eyes on Sir Robert Walpole, who was in one of the side boxes, and loudly encored it. Sir Robert instantly saw that they applied the song to him, and no sooner was it finished, than he himself with great good-humour encored it; by which address he so won on the audience that they gave him a general huzza from all parts of the house, but afterwards he is said to have always evinced great reluctance to be present at this popular political play.

It is not generally known that the first song, "The modes of the court," was written by Lord Chesterfield,— "Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre," by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams,— "When you censure the age," by Swift,—and "Gamsters and lawyers are jugglers alike," by Mr. Fortescue, Master of the Rolls.

But to return to our narrative. The first part that I have been able to assign to Macklin is, that on the 18th of September 1730, he personated Sir Charles Freeman, in the great booth on the bowling-green Southwark; a proof that he did not then stand eminent, for the part is trifling, and the company was certainly not distinguished. But in the winter of the same year he was engaged again at Lincoln's-inn-fields, and received the first marks of approbation as an Irish witness in the comedy of *The Coffee-house Politician*, and in consequence an intimacy between him and Fielding ripened into friendship.

It is necessary to mention some facts, which belong more to general history than to the biography of our hero, but as the stage holds a mirror up to nature, and reflects the passing manners of the time, they may be as well noticed here as elsewhere. There was a house in Covent Garden remarkable for selling Derbyshire ale, cheap and much liked by the customers. The calm which succeeded the peace of Utrecht reduced many officers to live on their friends, and those

in particular who lived about London much frequented this house, which they did at this time in such numbers, that by way of distinction they were called the Derby Captains; a term much used by Farquhar and other comic writers of his day. Macklin often here drank his pint of Derby ale. At that time Covent Garden also was a scene of much dissipation, being surrounded with taverns and night-houses, which, with the vicinity of the houses in Clare-market, were the rendezvous of the theatrical spirits. The ordinaries were there from sixpence to a shilling a-head; at the latter were two courses, and a good deal of what was called good company in the mixed way. The Bedford Head, in Maiden-lane, was probably among the last of them; and there was perhaps among the people less distinction of orders and classes than is now commonly met with. The butchers of Clare-market were the friends of the players, and always in every riot sided with them, for it was not criminal in those days to be riotous. A countryman was instantly known by his dress as well as his manners; grey cloth or drab-colour, with a slouched hat and lank hair, was the common hue and style of their appearance. London was then seldom visited; stage-coaches were few, and the country shop-keepers had their goods sent to them on written orders. The city and west-end of the town were widely apart; no merchant lived out of the former, his residence was attached to his counting-house. The first emigration from the city was to Hatton-garden, but none save men of large acknowledged fortune durst take so great a flight. The lawyers lived mostly in the inns of court, and the players around the theatres.

The audiences were then of different natures to those of our day, likewise; a vulgar person scarcely ever frequented the pit, and very few women, as is still the practice in foreign theatres. In that part of the house the audience was composed of prosperous young merchants, barristers, and students of the inns of court. Riots rarely disturbed the tranquility of the pit; none but the people of independent fortune and avowed rank ever presumed to go into the boxes, and the lower ones were sacred to virtue and decorum. No man sat covered in a box, or stood up during the representation, save those only of the last row who could incommode nobody. The women of the town seldom frequented the theatres, but kept few and far aloof in obscure situations; neither boots nor spurs were admitted before the curtain, nor horses behind the scenes. There was in all public life a greater observance of order, while in private a more homely and hearty intermixture. Many allusions to this state of society may be found in the comic writings of that time, and unless they are understood, some of the best points of the plays fall without effect. Comedy is the glass of fashion,—the figures are ever changing in it; tragedy is the mirror of the passions, which are in every age similar and unalterable.

It ought here to be mentioned, that Macklin was tried at the Old Bailey, on the 12th of December 1735, for having run a fellow actor through the eye, in a passion, with a broomstick, but he was found guilty only of manslaughter.

The particular period when Macklin married is not very distinctly

made out to us; but his eldest daughter played in 1742, the little Duke of York, in *Richard the Third*. Mrs. Macklin's name was Grace Parror, a good actress in odd and old women, the humble friend of Booth's wife, Miss Saintlowe, with whom she lived. The marriage was profitable to Macklin, and she had an intractable husband to manage; but as there was much good-nature on both sides between them, it proved tolerably happy.

In 1741, Macklin certainly reached the highest height he was ordained to attain, and that was in the part of Shylock which was then raised from the base and blackguard cast into which it had been the custom of the players to represent it, and fairly admitted to its proper tragic importance—the change has been ascribed to Macklin, and the performance has been said to have been one of the noblest specimens of acting. The character of Shylock has indeed been always reckoned one of the most difficult to personate effectively—many performers, who have been great in other parts, have failed entirely in this. John Philip Kemble's representation has been condemned as an entire misconception. It was about the time that Macklin first played Shylock that his marriage with Miss Parror took place.

The history of the revival of Shylock is curious, and should not be omitted. It had happened that Fleetwood, the manager, was by his imprudence ruined, and induced Macklin, in one of his hours of difficulty, to join him in a bond for three thousand pounds. Macklin, however, soon saw his folly, and resolved, if possible, to extricate himself. Full of gloomy reflections he went with his wife to Bristol, where soon hearing how Fleetwood was embarrassed, he returned suddenly, in order to disengage himself from an obligation that threatened him with the loss of liberty for life. On his return he called at the manager's house, where, being told he was attending the late Frederick Prince of Wales in viewing the curiosities of Bartholomew Fair, he hastened to the spot, where he told Fleetwood he had just broke out of Bristol gaol, and a long frightful tale, all equally true. A meeting was in consequence settled for that night, at which the actor played his part so well that Paul Whitehead was induced to become bondsman for him, and so the matter was settled as far as Macklin was concerned. But Whitehead was soon obliged to pay the money, for Fleetwood ran away to France, leaving Macklin in the management behind him; and it was owing to this circumstance that he was led to revive the play of *The Merchant of Venice*, which had been laid upon the shelf ever since 1701, to make way for an alteration of the same play by Lord Lansdown, called *The Jew of Venice*.

The play was announced to be in preparation, but when he came to affix to himself the part of Shylock the laugh was general. His best friends shook their heads, and his rivals exulted in secret, and flattered him with success to work his destruction. His keen observation and suspicious temper saw the train that was laying for him, and he seemingly affected to assist it at the rehearsals, by playing under both his voice and power, and thus entrapped them in their own snare.

The long expected night at last came; the house was crowded from roof to foundation, and the two front rows of the pit were filled with critics. "When," says he, "I made my appearance in the green-room, dressed, with my red hat on my head, my piqued beard, black gown, &c., and with a confidence which I had never before assumed, the performers all stared at one another." The bell at last rung; he palpitated a little, then throwing himself on the protection of Providence boldly advanced on the stage, and was received with thunders of applause. The attempt was eminently successful, and raised himself to the summit of his glory.

We are now verging to an important era in the history of the English stage, the appearance of Garrick. A few years before he came out at Goodman's Fields, Macklin had become acquainted with him, and spoke of him as a very sprightly young man, neatly made, of an expressive countenance, and most entertaining manners. Garrick was at this time a wine merchant, and they became intimate friends—and when he did appear as a player, Macklin was one of his warmest advocates. The revolution which Garrick introduced he warmly defended, and maintained, though he was not able to attain it well himself, that instead of an elevated voice or depression of its tones, and a formal measured step in treading the stage, the natural familiarity of Garrick's manner was juster and superior. This was the more agreeable task for him, as Rich, several years before, had discharged himself from the Lincoln's Inn theatre for speaking too familiarly on the stage; but he had now his revenge.

In 1743 the irregularities in the concern had arisen to such a pitch with Mr. Fleetwood, that Macklin, with Garrick and several more of the performers, associated against him. An application was made by them for a licence to perform at another theatre, but it was not granted. Disappointment and necessity soon compelled the refractory to go back, and Garrick joined them, but Macklin and his wife were excluded by the offended manager. This affair came to a rupture between Garrick and Macklin, and a sharp controversy was the consequence, which ended, as wherever there is more bitterness than reason, in no rational result. One fact, however, cannot be disguised; Macklin was left in the street, after his dismissal, in embarrassed circumstances, and in a condition that could not but affect the humane with pity. He was, however, so actuated by his resentment, that he did not feel it greatly himself. It was in their enmity that, among other faults, he imputed avarice to Garrick: a charge, however, far from being well founded, for the utmost that could in justice be ever said of Garrick was, that his economy was not uniform, nor always well regulated.

Being excluded from Drury Lane, Macklin, in the spring of 1744, opened the little theatre of the Haymarket with a tribe of green performers, who were his pupils; but the speculation did not greatly succeed, and in the following winter matters were so arranged that he returned to Drury Lane, and conciliated the public on his appearance by a prologue of his own writing, in which his error was acknowledged.

Towards the close of the season of 1746-47, the reputation of *The*



*Suspicious Husband* sharpened a number of green-room wits, who thought less of it than the public. Macklin opposed himself to their opinion, and wrote a farce in vindication of the comedy, but it was withdrawn, being unsuccessful.

In 1748, Mr. Thomas Sheridan, who was then manager of the Dublin Theatre, engaged Macklin and his wife for two years, at a salary of eight hundred pounds a-year; liberal in itself, but beyond the establishment to sustain. This Macklin probably soon saw, but he had a greater theatrical grievance to complain of. They had scarcely been a month in Smock Alley, when he discovered that the manager was more inclined to perform tragedies than comedies, and was guilty of the heinous theatrical sin of putting his own name in the playbills in larger characters than Mr. Macklin's; so that in the end, on account of Macklin's humour, both he and his wife were shut out of the Dublin theatre.

He then returned to England, where he commenced manager with a strolling troop at Chester, and in the winter came back to London, and performed at Covent Garden theatre.

In 1753, having obtained from Garrick the use of his theatre, Drury Lane, for the night, he took a formal leave of the stage, with an epilogue written for the occasion by Garrick. The step was in itself ludicrous, for he was still in the vigorous possession of all his faculties; but he had formed a scheme of at once making his fortune by establishing a tavern, coffee-house, and school of oratory, in the Piazza of Covent Garden—a scheme conceived in ignorance and carried into effect by presumption. It failed, though executed with much ceremonious mummery, neither consistent with the age nor the manners of the nation.

Macklin, however, worked at his scheme till he became a bankrupt, when, being released from the duties of lecturer and tavern-keeper—duties which neither his talents or temper ever fitted him for executing properly, his intention was to found a new theatre in Ireland with Spranger Barry. In the mean time, an incident occurred sufficiently characteristic of our hero, and of a sort of men that go about town, sometimes with fortune, and sometimes with none, but equally worthless, and equally despised, whether with or without.

Miss Macklin had but just appeared on the stage, when a noble Lord well known on the turf, called on the morning of her benefit, as her father was sitting at breakfast, and after praising her in the highest terms, his Lordship said to Macklin,

"After what I have said of your daughter, Mr. Macklin, you may suppose I am not insensible to her merits—I mean to be her friend; not in the article of taking tickets for her benefit, and such trifling acts of friendship, which mean nothing more than the vanity of patronage. I mean to be her friend for life."

"What do you allude to?" said the actor, roused by the last expression, and staring at his guest.

"Why," replied the other, "I mean as I say, to make her my friend for life: and as you are a man of the world, and it is fit you should be considered in the business, I now make you an offer of

four hundred per annum for your daughter, and two hundred in like manner for yourself, to be secured on any of my estates, during both of your natural lives."

Macklin heard him : he was at the time spreading some butter on his roll, and had in his hand a large case-knife, which grasping firmly, and looking at the fellow, desired him instantly to quit the room, telling him how much he was surprised at his attempt at the honour of a child through the medium of a parent. He affected not to heed the reproof, when Macklin springing from his seat, and holding his knife at his throat, bade him make the best of his way downstairs. The noble rascal needed no other admonition, but jumped to the door, and scampered off across the market at full speed.

Previously to the indentures being drawn between our hero and Barry, for their new theatre in Crow Street, Dublin, Macklin, gave in a plan of managerial arrangement which roused Barry. Seeing him surprised, Macklin cried, "Not, my dear Barry, that I want to take your parts from you, but by way of giving the town variety, you shall play *Macbeth* one night, and I another, and so on with the rest of the tragic characters. Thus we shall throw lights upon one another's performance, and give a bone to the lads of the College."

Barry remonstrated against this absurd project, telling him gently that Macklin had a large circle of comic parts, sufficient both for fame and fortune, without risking the taking up a new business, at his time of life. The taunt had the due effect. Barry would have nothing to do with him as a fellow-manager, though he afterwards engaged him as a journeyman, with his wife.

In the spring of 1757, Macklin, in consequence, went to Ireland with Barry, and was present at laying the foundation-stone of Crow Street house. He was indeed a constant inspector of the progress of the building, descanting on the structure of the Greek and Roman theatres, of which he knew as much as he did about the cathedral in Pandemonium. To the no small amusement of the spectators, one of the workmen reminded him, that they were building an Irish not a Greek playhouse, and must build according to the plan ; at which he was so offended, that he silently slunk away.

Before the theatre was finished Mrs. Macklin died, to the great grief and loss of her husband, as her judgment and good sense often kept him within the pale of propriety.

On the 23rd of October 1758, the new theatre in Crow Street was opened, and Macklin joined the company, when a decent time after her death had elapsed. In the course of the following year he returned to London, where he prepared his amusing farce of *Love à la Mode* for the stage—a stock piece, which though at first it met with opposition, is deservedly so still when actors can be found able to act it. The history of it is curious.

Some time before going to Dublin, Barry and Macklin had been spending the evening at a public house, when they were joined by an Irishman, who had been some years in the Prussian service. He happened to seat himself in the same box with the managers, and as Barry perfectly understood the Irish character, could tell agreeable stories about them, and was besides considered an ingenious humbug,

he soon scraped an acquaintance with his countryman, and brought him out in full blow. The simple, honest stranger was led on to speak of his birth, parentage, and education, and to tell them how he was originally designed for a priest, and following an uncle, who was of that profession, to France, to be bred up for that purpose; how, luckily his uncle died and left him to follow the profession of his soul, which was a soldier; how he afterwards listed in the Prussian service; how he was rewarded by the great Frederick with a lieutenancy; and how he was come over to England to receive a legacy, left him by a cousin of his mother, a cheesemonger in the Borough. To this account he gave them a long list of his amours in France and Prussia, and sung them humorous Irish songs, and yet was, withal, so open-hearted and unsuspecting, that Macklin jocularly attributed his great success among the ladies, to his having a tail behind, common to all Irishmen. On the instant, the stranger pulled off his coat and waistcoat to convince Macklin that no Irishman in that respect was better than another man. It was out of this conversation, and the simplicity of the officer, that the construction of the farce originated, at first intended for a five act play, but curtailed into a farce by the advice of Arthur Murphy.

Macklin's next dramatic bantling was *The True-born Irishman*, a clever farce, which was received with great success and popularity in Dublin, but when attempted in London was damned. In 1764 he produced another piece, being then at Smock Alley theatre, called *The True-born Scotchman*, which was so successful, that the author was encouraged to extend it, and it is now the far-famed *Man of the World*; an admirable conception, excellently worked up and universally admired as one of the best comedies on the English stage; but, save in the possession of a Scotchman, or of one who can speak the language properly, never adequately performed; indeed, nothing can be more disgusting than Macklin's Scotch as such. He appears to have had no just idea of what it should be, but wrote bad language and spelled Scotch words with the English idiom, imagining that a distinct language, both in idiom and by the use of inflections, was the same as English.

Macklin returned to London in 1767, where he brought out the farce of *The True-born Irishman*, but where, as I have already stated, it did not succeed, but it gave occasion to a remark of the author, which, for shrewdness, would have done honour to Quin. Seeing how flatly the performance told on the audience, "I see it," said he; "they are right. There's a geography in humour as well as in morals, which I had not previously considered."

About the year 1770 he returned to Ireland, having in the mean time been engaged in a Chancery suit, into which he entered with as much zeal and alacrity as if he had been the solicitor. In fact, he was so; for he answered all the bills himself, presenting to the eye many a sheet of endless repetitions, with no improper brevity, as if he had been regularly bred to the law. But his performance in the character of an attorney was nothing equal to his more legitimate attempt as a player in a new line of characters. At the age of seventy—but there is great reason, as I have shown, to believe,

when he was ten years older,—he aspired to new honours in Richard, Macbeth, and Othello. Early in the year 1772, being in London, he made an engagement with the manager of Covent Garden theatre, and on the 23rd of October, in the same season, performed Macbeth. Previously the character used to be dressed in a suit of scarlet and gold, with a tie-wig, and, in every other respect, like a modern military officer: a glittering illustration of the state of learning among the players. Garrick always played it in this attire; Macklin, however, saw the absurdity, and appeared in the old Caledonian habit, and the other characters were also appropriately dressed. But although his performance had many points of excellence, it was not altogether a good performance, and he was treated with much contumely by some of the audience; so much so, considering his great age, that it reflects on the parties the utmost disgrace.

In 1775 he engaged to perform in Dublin and Cork, and he visited at intervals Scotland, and the provincial theatres.

About this time, he, who had ever some scheme in his head besides those germane to the matter of his profession, intended to leave the public, and at the age of seventy-five, if not eighty-five, to begin a new career as a farmer; but, like many others, it went off into thin air.

In 1781, the comedy of *The Man of the World*, a little softened to mitigate the licenser, was brought out at Covent Garden. But in the course of the season the author met with a great misfortune by the death of his daughter, whom he much lamented. In 1784, he accepted an engagement to perform in Dublin. He was then, at the lowest computation, eighty-five, but by strong probability, ninety-five; yet at this extraordinary age, by either computation, did he engage to visit a distant land, and to perform at least twice a week two of the most difficult parts; he fulfilled, however, not only his engagement with spirit, but visited Liverpool and Manchester in the course of his journey; performed at each some of his principal characters, and continued, with scarcely any declension of his powers, till the 28th of November 1788, when he first experienced a decay in his memory. Next year, on the 10th January 1789, his recollection again failed; his last attempt on the stage was on the 7th of May following, when he tried Shylock for his own benefit, which the manager, knowing the state of the old man's finances, had granted, but to prevent disappointment, had another actor to study the part, for he dreaded the veteran's infirmities.

Macklin having dressed himself with his usual accuracy, went into the green-room, and coming up to the late Mrs. Pope said, "My dear, are you to play to-night?"—"Good God! to be sure I am; don't you see I am dressed for Portia!"—"Ah, very true, I had forgot;—but who is to play Shylock?" The feeble sadness with which he who was dressed for the Jew said this depressed all who heard it. Mrs. Pope however answered, rousing herself, "Why, you; are not you dressed for the part?" He put his hand to his forehead, and said pathetically, "God help me!—my memory has, I fear, left me!" The whole range of the invented drama has few

more mournful scenes ; the poor old man, ninety-two or a hundred and two years old, went upon the stage and delivered two or three speeches, but evidently did not understand what he was repeating ; after some time he, however, recovered, but it was only a flash from the burnt-out candle in the socket. Nature could go no farther ;—he paused,—a poor, weak, and despised old man,—and looking helplessly around, said, “ I can do no more,” and retired from the stage for ever.

In private life, after this affecting exhibition, one of the most truly so ever shown upon the stage, Macklin, relieved from the drudgery of duty, somewhat recovered his wonted firmness, and his last years were made comfortable with an annuity purchased for him by the generosity of his friends. The remainder of life he spent, however, with only occasional enjoyment ; he went regularly to the play, but sometimes he forgot even the performance before him, and inquired, “ What was the play, and who the performers ;” but the audience pitied his feeble condition,—on his appearance at the pit-door, no matter how crowded the house was, they rose to make room for him, and to give him his accustomed seat, the centre of the bench behind the orchestra. One of the last efforts of his mind was when the Prince (George the Fourth) and Princess of Wales, after their marriage, appeared at the theatre ; the Prince recognised old Macklin and bowed to him, and the Princess soon after did the same, an honour which for some time gave him much pleasure, but he soon forgot it. On the 11th of July 1797, Death would equivocate with Time no longer,—Macklin in the evening composed himself, as some thought, for his usual sleep, but from that sleep he never woke again. He was buried in St. Paul’s, Covent Garden, and his funeral was not only solemnly attended by his theatrical brethren, but by a great concourse of the populace, who regarded his death as an event important somehow to them all, for it interested their imagination, he having lived in three centuries.

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### JOHN HENDERSON.

WHENEVER a person of extraordinary talent appears he is uniformly followed by a herd of imitators, and men who, if they had cultivated their own powers, might have become eminent originals, by falling in with that fashion never attain more than secondary rank. One of this class was Henderson, who in his day held a very brilliant station in the opinion of his friends, but now, when we have only the records of his merits to compare with each other, seems, in fact, to have been really only an able imitator.

The great peculiar endowment of John Henderson was mimicry : with the help of that talent, and in skilfully observing the distinctive characteristics of the celebrated players of the time, with a competent portion of natural shrewdness, he acquired considerable contemporaneous celebrity ; but he was never a first-rate performer,

even while it is admitted that in some parts he displayed great ability. The object of his ambition was evidently to be a copy of Garrick, with the addition of something that belonged to himself, but he unquestionably failed, and not only fell greatly short of his model, but when he acted from himself proved of an inferior order.

He was born in Goldsmith-street, Cheapside, in February, 1746-7, and claimed his descent from the famous Dr. Alexander Henderson, of Fordyll, in the North of Scotland, who maintained the cause of the Scottish Covenant and Presbyterian Church discipline in a conference at the Isle of Wight with Charles I. in opposition to the hierarchy. This lineage is, however, considered a little apocryphal; but his grandfather is mentioned in the Memoirs of Mr. Annesley, whose singular adventures attracted so much attention, and probably gave rise to the story of Savage and his unnatural mother. How often strange meetings and confluences of public persons are found in their memoirs! The reader of biography, who reflects on this, cannot but be struck with the truth of the aphorism that like draws to like; in so many and such various ways do individuals who resemble each other only in their notoriety constitute, as it were, a special class, by their accidental junction with each other.

Henderson's father died when he was but two years old and left his mother, with two sons dependent upon her, with only the interest of a thousand pounds to support them. She, however, retired to Newport Pagnell, and with a meritorious parsimony was enabled to educate and bring them up. The eldest was apprenticed to an engraver, but being of a delicate constitution he was constrained, for the advantage of the air, to retire to Paddington, where being lodged in the same house with the afterwards renowned Kitty Fisher,—who, in her day, if not the Cook's Oracle, was a weird sister of the “pot,”—he suddenly, almost as it were by accident, died in her arms. John, our hero, continued with his mother, who not only taught him to read, and pointed out the authors who merited his chiefest study, but to recite passages from the English classics in her possession.

The first play which fell into his hands was *The Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare, and it inspired him with a strong wish to see a play, but there was no theatre in Newport Pagnell.

At the age of eleven he was sent to a school at Hemel-Hempstead, where he remained about twelve months. He then returned to London, and having by this time evinced a taste for drawing, he was placed as a house-pupil with Fournier, who was then a drawing-master of some reputation, but more renowned for the versatility than the eminence of his abilities; for though drawing was his profession, his ambition was to do what any other man could, and in consequence, being apt, he in the course of a few years distinguished himself as an engraver, musician, carver, modeller in wax, and wrote a book, esteemed of considerable merit, on drawing and perspective. Boswell, the biographer of Johnson, in his Journal says, “The beasts have memory, judgment, and all the faculties and passions of our mind, in a certain degree; but no beast is a cook; and Fournier, among other accomplishments, was certainly not a beast, for he

dressed and sold *alamode* beef, and the truffles and morrels he made use of led him to the study of natural history. At one time he kept a chandler's shop, and could transmute sprats into anchovies, substitute willow-leaves for tea, and augment the mass of Lisbon sugar with fine sand. He was also a tolerable button-maker, and not a contemptible buffoon, and he could bear the test of Dr. Franklin's definition of a man. "No animal but man," says the American philosopher, "makes a thing, by means of which he can make another thing." Fournier made graving tools and modelling instruments.—Great excellence could hardly be hoped for in all these manifold attempts, but such was the master of Henderson.

From a person of this description, it could not be expected that our hero could acquire distinction. He was indeed used as might have been foreseen : instead of learning drawing, he was chiefly taught driving ; for much of his time was occupied in conveying Fournier, in a one-horse chaise, to several of the academies about London, where he taught. Henderson had the horse to groom when he returned to town.

From Fournier he was removed to the house of a relation, a silversmith in St. James's Street, who proposed to employ him in making drawings and designs for his own profession ; but the silversmith died, and at the age of twenty Henderson was left with few connexions, and without any well-determined pursuit.

Being thus cast upon the world alone, and meeting with no situation he could accept, he was advised to turn his attention to the stage, having among his companions often displayed those gifts of mimicry which he was afterwards greatly famed for possessing. His condition, however, during the time of what may be called his dramatic novitiate, passed not unpleasantly. He was in the family of relations, who treated him with kindness, who considered his interests as connected with their own, and who esteemed him for his talents and cheerfulness.

It has been said of Henderson, that perhaps it would not have been easy to point out a man who possessed such convivial powers in early life. His observations were shrewd and comprehensive, and his manners sprightly and winning, but he was prone to see the ludicrous in all things, and many pleased with his wit, were withered by his ridicule.

A dealer in trinkets, who was ambitious of seeing his name enrolled as an artist in an exhibition-catalogue, made a copy of the Duke of Leinster's arms in human hair, and wrote to Henderson for a proper inscription to put under it, that it might attract notice in the exhibition-room—"Oh ! I'll do that," said the wag ; "you observe the supporters are two monkeys, take your inscription from Milton,

' In their looks divine,  
The image of their glorious maker shone.'"

While he was preparing himself for the stage, the Ode to the Memory of Shakspeare was very popular as delivered by Garrick. Henderson was induced to attempt an imitation, and it is said, that it required a very accurate ear to distinguish the one speaker from

the other. This was exhibited in a barn, or some such place, at the polite village of Islington, for the benefit of certain unfortunates self-denominated comedians.

At this time Henderson was esteemed among his companions, not only for his admirable mimicry, but the beauty of his readings, particularly of the story of Lefevre, by Sterne, to whose memory he wrote an ode, which was considered by his boon-companions as a surprising composition. This alleged master-piece, however, only tends to indicate his secondary character. Henderson, in fact, was, in his twentieth year, a thorough cockney of the apprentice grade. He was a distinguished member of a weekly club in Maiden Lane, consisting of twelve or fourteen members, "who wished to unite to the festivity of Anacreon the humour of Prior, the harmony of Pope, and above all, the sensibility and pleasantry of Sterne."

It was a rule, when the society met, for the president to pour a libation, and drink to the memory of some departed genius, under the pretty denomination of "a skull;" and if they had drunk to the memory of Shakspeare, for instance, it was expected that the person next in succession should give a sentiment, which should have some allusion to the bard or his writings, and be new. But it was soon found that they were all so apt at work of this kind, that it interfered with their plan, which was to go home sober, and in consequence a delicious improvement was introduced. Each member was obliged to bring with him a volume of his favourite writer, and read such a part aloud as he thought most contributory to the amusement of the society. Thus Henderson came to great eminence, among the fourteen members, as a reader of Sterne!

It has become a duty in modern biography to seek and make up a catalogue of the works that men of genius studied in their youth, and no doubt some metaphysicians may discern a use in such collections, in assisting to form a proper idea of their characters; but I am not very sure in what the utility consists, knowing that such works as the following were part of Mr. Henderson's study,—“The lamentable and true tragedie of Maister Arden of Feversham, who was most wickedly murdered by means of his most wantonne wife, who hired two desperate ruffians, Black Will and Shakbagge, to kill him.”—“Life and Death of Lewes Goudfrey, with his abominable sorceries, after selling himself to the Devil.”—“A Bloody New Year's Gift.”—“A true declaration of the cruel and bloody murder of Maister Robert Heath, in his own house in High Holborne, being the sign of *The Firebrand*.”—“A true relation of how a woman at Athorbury, having used divers horrid imprecations, was suddenly burned to ashes, there being no fire near her.”—“Hellish murder committed by a French midwife.”—“Histories of apparitions, spirits, visions, and other wonderful illusions of the Devil.”—“The Surey demoniac, or Satan, his dreadful judgments upon Richard Dugdale.”—“A pleasant treatise of Witches, their imps and meetings.”—“News from Italie of a most lamentable tragedie lately befallen.”—“Philomythic, wherein outlandish birds, beast, and fishes are taught English.”—“Torquatus Vandermer, his seven years' studie in the Arte offe Majecke, upon



the twelve months of the year.”—“The Devil conjured by Thomas Lodge: a discourse of the sottle practises of Devils and Witches.”—“The Miseries of Infant Marriage.”—“Lavatus of Ghosts and Spirits walking by night, and of strange noises, crackes, and so forth.”—“Baylis his wall-flower as it grew out of the stone-chamber of Newgate.”—“Admirable History of a Magician, who seduced a pious woman to be a witch,” and “King James his *Dæmonologia*.”—This catalogue matches that which Byron has preserved of his early reading, and affords good evidence of the matter which some minds are made of.

Possibly by the perusal of such books as have been enumerated the mind of Henderson was familiarized to fancies and objects of terror, and some colouring might be drawn from them for his portraits of Shakspeare’s grim characters; but, unfortunately for this theory, it was not in such parts that Henderson excelled. This, however, is no place to discuss the probable predilection for these works; all I would at present remark is that although Henderson had an appetite to sup as heartily on horrors as Spagnoletto had for skinned martyrs, I doubt if it very materially affected the native cheerfulness of his animal spirits.

As a probationer of the theatre, Henderson, like all such, was doomed to suffer his initiatory trials. Garrick was the object of his imitation, but the Roscius was not much gratified with the freedom taken, and an introduction to him was difficult; at last he obtained an audience of Paul Hiffernan, at that time one of the hangers-on at Garrick’s footstool.

When the name and intention of Henderson were announced to Hiffernan he looked in his face steadily, and then, like a drill-serjeant giving the word of command, cried, “Please to stand upon your pins.” Henderson stood up. “Now,” said Hiffernan, “young gentleman, I’ll soon see if you’ll ever make an actor—I’ll soon see whether or not you are fit for the stage;” and stalking to a table-drawer, he solemnly took out a ball of packthread, from which he cut off a long piece, and tied the knife—portentous weapon—to the end of it. Then drawing a chair near to the young candidate, he mounted, and holding the knife to the top of Henderson’s head he let it fall like a plummet to the ground. On descending from the chair and taking from his pocket, with a grave countenance, a two-foot rule, he in awful silence measured the length of the packthread, and shaking his head said, “Young gentleman, I am sorry to mortify you, but go your ways home, set your thoughts on somewhat else, mind your business, be what it will, and remember I told you; for the sock and buskin you wont do—you will not do, Sir, by an inch and a quarter.”

This story ludicrous in itself, is much of a kind with the receptions often met with in the world by those who are standing on its threshold. Few men have ever reached the vestibule without observing that the grosser species of domesticities are the ushers of the hall, and like Hiffernan, judge of the candidate’s intellectual qualities for whatever he offers to undertake by his corporeal appearance; nor is the

rule without wisdom, for good looks have long been esteemed the best recommendation.

Tired of paying fruitless homage to Garrick, Henderson resolved to try his fortune with the manager of Covent Garden theatre; but his success was no better, for the first question put to him was, "Had he ever been on the stage before, and was he a principal performer?" Some time after, he again applied to Garrick, who condescended to hear him rehearse several scenes in different characters, when he gave it as his opinion, that his voice was not sufficiently melodious, nor his pronunciation clear enough. "You have," said Garrick, "in your mouth too much wool or worsted, which you must absolutely get rid of before you can be fit for Drury Lane stage." But although this was humiliating enough, there was still some favour excited in the great actor by what he had seen, for he advised him to discipline his powers by country practice, and actually recommended him to the manager of the Bath stage; in consequence of which, Henderson, in September 1772, was enrolled as one of the Bath comedians for three years. The first year he was to receive one guinea per week, the second one guinea and a half, and the third two guineas, with an annual benefit. The only remark I would make is, that by this graduated scale of payment, it is plainly evident that the seeds of talents were discerned in Henderson, but that it was thought time was requisite for their cultivation and growth.

It would be ungenerous to deny the efficacy of Garrick's scenic patronage. When it was known on the walks and in the public places of Bath, that a new actor had arrived from London, under the favour of the grand Roscius, all people of every rank became eager to see the phenomenon. He trembled himself with apprehension, and so great was his dread of a failure, that he assumed the name of Courtenay, and under that name made his appearance at Bath, on the 6th of October 1772, in the part of Hamlet. His anxiety on the occasion was so excessive that he could scarcely be heard at first; but the spectators, who felt their own self-importance gratified by his diffidence, soon eased him of his fears, and he concluded, not only with applause, but loud acclamations.

When the performance ended, a droll anecdote is told of the result. John Ireland, who was present, went into the green-room, and his discovery is the origin of the tale. Henderson's predecessor in the character was Lee, who used to play it in a suit of black velvet, much too large for Henderson; he was therefore under the necessity of performing in a suit of black cloth. His extreme agitation occasioned great perspiration; the coat was as if it had been "immersed in ocean;" and when the habit was resigned to the wardrobe-keeper, he received it with astonishment, mingled with horror, exclaiming, "They may talk of Muster Lee, but Muster Lee is nothing to this man, for what they call perspiration." Such were the tokens of approbation which adorned the first night of Henderson's appearance at Bath.

*Hamlet*, in the course of a few nights, was again performed. The house was as full as on the first night, and in his own opinion he played better. The Bath manager, who soon found his account in

frequently employing Henderson, worked him vigorously. He is supposed not to have acted fewer than thirty principal parts in the first year of his engagement, and all the Bath voices were loud in his praise.

With a young man's estimate of himself he returned to London, expecting that the doors of Drury Lane and Covent Garden would be thrown open to him; but he was grievously disappointed. The managers did not give credit to the rumours which had come from Bath concerning him; or, what was the same thing, they did not believe that a Bath audience was composed of judges so good as the Londoners. Henderson, however, had his revenge, and in his hours of festivity frequently gratified himself and his friends by imitations of the principal performers, particularly of Garrick, who, when informed that his voice was such an echo of the green-room, invited him with two friends to breakfast, and requested a specimen of his art. The first three examples were Barry, Woodward, and Love, and Garrick was in ecstasy at the imitations; but, after laughing his fill at those, he said, "I am told you have me; do, my dear Sir, let me hear what I am." Henderson at first excused himself, till, urged by the two neutrals, he, in an evil hour, consented, and gave specimens of the little man in Benedict. The two hearers were delighted. Garrick, however, listened in sullen silence, and then rising walked across the room, and said, "Egad, if that be my voice, I have never known it myself; for, upon my soul, it is entirely dissimilar to every thing I conceived of mine, and totally unlike any sound that ever struck my ear till this moment."

In this there may have been more truth than either of the parties supposed, in two ways—whatever wounds our self-admiration, renders us unfair judges, and it may happen that we do not hear ourselves as others hear us; but without embarking in any disquisition of this kind, perhaps neither the apprehension of Garrick, nor the mimicry of Henderson, was quite just; for we are to remember that Garrick was by this time an old man, and his voice, as well as his appearance, was suffering from age, and that Henderson saw him only in his decay.

Chagrined with the repulses he had encountered in London, Henderson returned to Bath, where he quickly added new lustre to his fame. His friends there soothed his vexation by their applause, and the public spoke loudly of his performance; but the still small voice of the manager behind the scenes was powerful over all.

In relating the little that has been preserved of those amusing persons who, in their day, were the delight of the theatrical world, there is a difficulty in the task which may not strike the reader so powerfully as it has done me. In all the memoirs of the actors a remarkable vein of vanity runs through them, and they are for the most part written by friends and admirers. To extract the truth from vanity and admiration is no easy task, especially when the subject becomes in any degree controversial. This is particularly the case with the present subject. Henderson was undoubtedly a clever performer, and a mimic of the most perfect class; but he was not an actor of quite the highest rank, though his own conceit made him

imagine himself another Garrick, and his friends took every opportunity to proclaim him as such with all their paper-trumpets. It must, however, be allowed that he was treated harshly and coldly by the London managers, and although their conduct was, no doubt, extenuated to themselves by their interest, yet it was not distinguished by either liberality or much intelligence. Mr. Colman objected to the style in which Henderson sometimes dressed himself, and condemned his Shylock as too shabby. "The dress," said he, "had the appearance of one hired from a pawnbroker's; and in the impassioned scene with Tubal, he seemed a black Lear, or an odd resemblance of a mad king in a storm." This was nothing to Garrick's contempt, for it partook of personal enmity, and we have Henderson's own words for the odious sarcasm. "Garrick," says he, "asserts he had heard I swallow my parts like an eager glutton, and spewed my undigested fragments in the face of the audience." And Foote said "he would not do." All this serves to confirm the idea that he was not so extraordinary a man as his friends represented. But nevertheless, at the end of the second Bath season, he returned to London, where, after remaining some time, he could not obtain an engagement on such terms as he had expected, and accordingly returned to Bath, and was most flatteringly received. Before this time he had, indeed, from the partiality with which he was regarded by the inhabitants and visitors of that city, been styled the Bath Roscius, and perhaps it is not saying too much, that few performers in private life were more courted, or able to enliven society with more pleasantry.

The next incident in his life which deserves notice, is an attempt to get on the London boards with Garrick, in which it must be acknowledged that he showed a full sense of his own merits. Garrick, in the course of the transaction, was indeed highly offended, and with some reason; he accused him of an insolent attempt to usurp his province, take the management out of his hands, and dictate such terms as no actor of the most established reputation had ever presumed to offer. These were strong terms, and perhaps exaggerated by passion; Henderson himself disclaimed the accusation, but still they were not unfounded. An attempt with Mr. Harris, at Covent Garden theatre, was soon after equally unsuccessful. Though it may seem ludicrous to make the remark, yet I do not make it lightly, the intrigues, and cabals, and jealousies, of statesmen, really appear to be inconsiderable, when compared with the mighty plots and machinations of the players.

In the summer of 1776 he played under the management of Mr. Yates, at Birmingham, with Mrs. Siddons, who had the preceding winter played a few characters at Drury Lane, but with so little effect, that she was discharged for inability. Our hero, however, had the discernment to perceive some of her powers, which were yet in bud, and wrote to his friend Mr. Palmer, the Bath manager, advising him in the strongest terms to engage her. Upon this curious fact I shall have an opportunity of expressing my opinion in the life of that sublime actress; but it would not have been fair towards Henderson,

not to have fully recognised his just claim to the honour of being among the earliest who did justice to her almost latent powers.

When Colman, in 1777, purchased from Foote the patent for acting plays at the little theatre in the Haymarket, he engaged Henderson, who was eager to show himself in London. With his renown as the *Bath Roscius*, he made his first appearance as Shylock, on the 11th of June 1777; and proved highly attractive. But notwithstanding his success was decidedly great, Leake and Harris would not be converted from their opinion, and still maintained that he was not qualified to undertake even a second or third part on the boards of Covent Garden.

The following winter he was, however, engaged at Drury Lane. Mr. Sheridan saw his merits, and acted towards him with liberality; but by this time his reputation was at its height, and he not only endured the test of the London public, but won fresh laurels.

His career may, therefore, be considered for some time as regular, and the incidents of his life were little different from those I have had occasion to notice of other eminent performers.

In 1780 he went to Dublin, where he performed with the success which had attended his efforts in London, and his company was greatly in demand. He married after his return from Ireland, and his professional career assuming the same cast as that of others, he was now considered the best tragedian of his time; Garrick was gone, and he had no eminent competitor.

On the 3rd of November 1785, he performed Horatius in *The Roman Father*, at Covent Garden, after which he was seized with an inflammatory disorder, and died on the 25th of the same month, in the fortieth year of his age. He was buried by his friends in Westminster Abbey, for he had ever many partial admirers.

There cannot, notwithstanding the remarks which truth required, be a doubt that Henderson was a performer above mediocrity, though far below excellence. His personal endowments were not of the first order, and these were sufficient to mark him of a secondary class; so much is appearance essential to a player. His height was below the common standard; his frame was uncompact, his limbs ill-proportioned. They were too short even for his height, and his countenance was not flexible in expression. In some respects he is said to have resembled, in his moments of animation, a portrait of Betterton by Sir Godfrey Kneller. His voice was not melodious; it was alike deficient in the tones of love and rage—but his judgment was his talent. In soliloquy he was admirable, and in the expression of thoughtfulness and hilarity he was almost great. In all the ordinary qualifications he never attained very eminent success; but still he was ever a little higher than mediocrity, and had he not been a public performer, he would have been an accomplished private character. In a word, he was pleasanter to his friends and contemporaries than it is possible to render him to posterity.

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*MRS. CHARLOTTE CHARKE.*

THIS eccentric damsel was the youngest child of Colley Cibber ; her mother was just forty-five years of age when she was produced, and had not for some seasons before been in the maternal way ; but, except by her father and mother, she was not received as a very welcome guest, a cause which has been supposed to have ministered to her misfortunes. She had, nevertheless, inherited from Nature considerable talents, and a large endowment of humour and whim.

When a mere child, about four years of age, she made herself distinguished by a passionate fondness for a periwig. One summer morning at Twickenham, where her father had part of a house and garden for the season, she crept out of bed, and imagined that by the help of a wig and waistcoat she would be a perfect representative of her venerable sire ; accordingly she stole softly into the servants' hall, taking her shoes and stockings with her, and a little dimity coat, which she contrived to pin up in such a manner as to supply the want of a pair of breeches. By the aid of a broom she took down a waistcoat of her brother's and an enormous tie-wig belonging to the old gentleman, which entirely enclosed her head and body, the knots of the ties thumping her heels as she marched along with a slow and solemn pace : this covert of hair, with the weight of a huge belt and a vast sword, was a terrible impediment to her procession.

Being thus accoutred, she took an opportunity to slip out of doors, rolled herself into dry ditch, and walked up and down the ditch, bowing to all who went by. But the oddity of her appearance soon attracted a crowd,—a circumstance which filled her with exceeding joy ; and so she walked herself into a fever in the happy thought of being taken for the squire, her papa.

During the following summer Mr. Cibber's family resided at Hampton Court, and the mother being indisposed, drank asses'-milk night and morning. Miss happened to observe that one of those health-restoring animals was attended by its foal, and accordingly formed a resolution of fixing upon the foal as a padnag : this design she communicated to a troop of young gentlemen and ladies, whose adverse fortunes rendered it convenient for them to come into any scheme Miss Charlotte Cibber could propose.

Mrs. Cibber's bridle and saddle were secretly procured, but the riper judgments of some of the young lady's companions soon convinced her of the unnecessary trouble of carrying the saddle, and so it was concluded to take the bridle only. Away went Miss and her attendants to the field where the harmless quadruped was sucking : it was seized and bridled, and Charlotte triumphantly astride proceeded homeward with a numerous retinue, whose huzzas were drowned by the braying of the gentle dam, which pursued with agonizing sounds her tender and oppressed little one.

Upon making this grand approach, Mr. Cibber was incited to inquire, and looking forth from the window beheld his daughter mounted on the young ass, preceded by a lad playing upon a twelve-penny fiddle, and a vast assemblage of dirty boys and girls in the

rear. Her mother was not quite so passive as the father, but, in the opinion of Miss, was too active; for no sooner was the young lady dismounted than she underwent the discipline of the birch, and was, in contempt of dignity, most shamefully taken prisoner in the sight of all her attendants, and fastened by a packthread to a large table; and, what was worst of all, she was obliged to ask her mother's pardon, who was, in the opinion of the young lady at the time, the most in fault: such is, in all ages, the short-sighted injustice of man!—in this case, of woman!

There was indeed no limit to the juvenile vagaries and tricks of this maiden. She mentions herself that in consequence of an old woman at Richmond having beaten her, she induced some of her playfellows to send as many as they could of her caps and small linen, that hung in the garden to dry, a-swimming down a brook that ran into the Thames, while she walked quietly home, apparently unconcerned at the mischief.

At eight years of age Charlotte was placed at a school in Park-street, Westminster, under the direction of a lady eminent for her good sense, who employed a French gentleman, a great master of languages, by whose advice she was instructed in Latin and Italian, and subsequently in other branches of learning which were not then deemed essential to female education.

After she had completed her different accomplishments, she retired with her mother to Hillingdon, near Uxbridge, where they lived for some time, and where Charlotte, for lack of other pastime, made herself mistress of shooting, in which she grew so great a proficient that she was capable of destroying all the venison and wild-fowl about the country. At length, unfortunately, one of her mother's straight-laced, old-fashioned neighbours paid them a visit, and persuaded her to put a stop to these unfeminine amusements, and so, upon this sober maiden-lady's hint, she was deprived of her gun.

Soon after she fell into infirm health, which occasioned her to be sent to Thorley, in Hertfordshire, the seat of Dr. Hales, an eminent physician, and a relation of the family, where she recovered, but made less progress than was expected in the art of housekeeping; for although she had daily before her the most perfect examples of housewifely qualities, she never once thought of cultivating those necessary offices, by which the young ladies of the family eminently distinguished themselves, especially in ornamenting the table. But if anything was amiss in the stable Charlotte was sure to be at the head of the mob, and if all the fine work of the family had been in the fire, she would not have forsaken the curry-comb to save it from destruction.

During her residence at Thorley she grew fond of the study of physic, and being indulged in having a pony of her own, her friend the Doctor often desired her to call upon the neighbouring invalids to ascertain how they were, which gave her a most pleasing opportunity of fancying herself a physician, and acquiring the solemnity necessary to an effectual practice of medicine. At the expiration of two years she was recalled home to the house at Hillingdon, where she persuaded her mother to let her fit up a dispensary. Here she

summoned all the old women to repair whenever they found themselves indisposed ; and thinking a few physical hard words would improve her skill and reputation, she had recourse to an old Latin dictionary, and soon confounded their senses.

Fond as she was of this learned office, she did not give up being lady of the horse, to which delicate employment she assigned a portion of every day's care. Providence, however, in all this was kind in many points, for though she did little actual good, she never had the least misfortune happen to any of the credulous mortals who relied upon her skill ; sometimes, however, she thought she had inflicted a malady upon them that would last as long as they lived.

In this pursuit it was highly necessary to furnish herself with drugs, and accordingly she went to Uxbridge, where there was an apothecary's widow then living, whose shop, with stuffed alligators, and a beggarly account of empty boxes, was an emblem of the one described by Shakspeare. The good woman was rejoiced at her appearance, and credited her with a cargo of combustibles sufficient to set up a mountebank ; but, alas ! the apothecary's widow sent in her bill, which, however, her father paid, but gave strict orders never to let Dr. Charlotte have any further trust :—Was not this sufficient to murder the fame of the ablest physician in the universe ? However, she was resolved not to give up her profession, and being deprived of the use of drugs, she had recourse to herbs. In this dilemma, a poor old woman came with a violent complaint of rheumatic pains, and a terrible disorder in her stomach ; Charlotte was at a loss what remedies to apply, but she dismissed her, like others of the faculty in difficulty, with an assurance of sending something to ease her, by an inward and outward application, before she went to bed.

It happened that the day was very wet, and the wetness suggested to Charlotte to gather up all the snails in the garden ; part of which, with coarse muscovado sugar, she made into syrup, to be taken a spoonful once in two hours. The rest she boiled with green herbs and mutton fat, and made into an ointment, and clapping becoming labels upon the phial and gallipot, sent her preparation, with a joyous bottle of hartshorn and *sal volatile*, purloined from her mother, to add a grace to her prescription.

In about three day's time the Goody came hopping along to return thanks for the great benefit she had received from the medicines, having found wonderful virtue and efficacy in the use of them. But fortune was not always kind ; the friendly rain was succeeded by a drought, so that our heroine was obliged to dismiss her with a word of advice—not to tamper too much ; as she was well recovered, to preserve herself so, otherwise a too frequent use of the remedy might lose its effect ; and with the most significant air she could assume, she bade her go home and keep herself warm, and be sure to drink no malt liquor.

Being deprived, by the cruelty of her father, of the widow's shop, she became tired of her medicinal experiments, and addicted herself to gardening ; and as she thought it always proper to imitate the actions of those characters she happened to represent, she also



assumed the peculiarities of the gardener's. After having worked two or three hours in the morning, she thought a broiled rasher of bacon upon a luncheon of bread in one hand, and a pruning-knife in the other, making seeds and plants the subject of her discourse, were the true characteristics of a gardener. At other times a halter and horse-cloth brought into the house and awkwardly thrown down, were emblems of her stable profession ; with now and then a shrug of the shoulders and a scratch of the head, and a hasty demand for small beer, and a "God bless you, make haste ; I have not a single horse dressed or washed, and here 'tis almost eight o'clock ; the poor cattle will think I've forgot 'em ; and to-morrow they go a long journey ; I'm sure I'd need take care of 'em." Perhaps this great journey was an afternoon's jaunt to Windsor, within seven miles of their house.

At this time her father had occasion to go to France, and the servant, who was in the capacity of groom and gardener, having the misfortune one afternoon to be violently inebriated, took it into his head to abuse the rest of his fellow servants, and was in consequence dismissed, to the inexpressible joy of Miss Charlotte who by that arrangement had then the full management of the garden and stables.

It was now sufficiently well known that, though she had a very acute perception of propriety in others, she had none in herself. She was indeed, in all respects, a singular person, and was deterred by no hazard from acting according to the whims of her own humour. Rumour of the man's dismissal soon spread far and wide, upon which Charlotte found it necessary to act as porter of the gate lest some lucky mortal might have been introduced, to deprive her of the happy situation to which she had succeeded. For some time she answered the applicants verbally ; but in the end being wearied with giving denials, she at last gave out that letters had come from her father in France, to inform them that he had hired a man at Paris. In all this time, though there was undoubtedly a vein of insanity in every thing she did, there was a careless innocence about her conduct that was often highly amusing to her family.

One day, upon her mother visiting her in the garden, where she was then digging, and approving of what she had done, Charlotte rested on her spade, and with a significant wink and a nod, asked if she imagined any of her other children could have done so much, and so well, at her age ? and then proceeded to dig away with the double purpose of impressing her mother with her superiority and her industry.

At this juncture Mrs. Cibber, who had no great opinion of the discarded servant's honesty, traced his footsteps under the windows on the night after his dismissal, and became alarmed. In the anxiety which this circumstance gave rise to, the old lady communicated her fears to Charlotte, who most heroically promised to protect her life. Accordingly she desired all their plate, of which they had a considerable quantity, to be gathered up, and placed in a large basket by her bedside. This preparation added to the happiness of Charlotte, as it gave her an opportunity of raising her reputation for courage ; and to

establish that character, she stripped the hall and kitchen of their fire-arms, consisting of her own carbine, of which she had been divested by the old maid's exhortation, a heavy blunderbuss, a musketoon, and two brace of pistols, all which she loaded with a couple of bullets in each. But no occurrence of any consequence took place ; not a mortal approached, and Charlotte began to fear she was undone ; till a friendly dog, which barked at the moon, gave a happy signal. Our heroine bounced from her repository at the first sound of the cur's voice, and fired out of the window, piece after piece, till she had wasted about a pound of powder and a proportionable quantity of shot. The family was soon alarmed ; her mother lay in horror, giving way to every fear. Charlotte, however, was not daunted, she represented the robber as having fled at her first fire ; but it was only the rustle of the wind in the bushes, for he had long before, in the course of that night, set off on foot for London. All the family was, however, consoled and comforted by what she said, and agreed that the loss of sleep was not to be put in competition with the hazard of their lives, from which she had so felicitously preserved them.

Immediately following this adventure she was involved in new troubles. Hearing of a fine young horse to be sold at Uxbridge, and having heard her father say before he went to France that he would purchase such an one when he came home, Charlotte flew to the man's house, where the horse was to be seen, and had him harnessed to a chaise, and out she set, at the hazard of her neck, on the Uxbridge Common. The horse was young and ungovernable, and dragged the chaise over hills and dales with such vehemence, that she justly despaired of ever seeing home again ; and in her flight she ran over a child of three years old that lay sprawling for amusement in the cart-rut. The rapidity luckily prevented the death of the child, which was lifted up by its parents, and brought after her, attended by a numerous mob ; but no essential harm being done, more than a small graze on the neck, the affair, as soon as Charlotte recovered from her fright, was made up with a shilling and a shoulder of mutton.

This was the last of her maidenly mischances, for soon after Mr. Charke came to court her—a worthless, but accomplished prodigal, who thought it would be a fine thing to become the son-in-law of Mr. Colley Cibber, who was then a patentee of Drury Lane theatre. It does not appear that the affection was very fervent or sincere on either side ; Charlotte thought it was a fine thing to be married, and fancied that her fondness for the condition of her lover was affection for himself.

About six months after her acquaintance with Mr. Charke, they were espoused in St. Martin's church : but, young and indiscreet, they were fitter for school : and we have seen enough of her natural disposition to let us know that she was rude and civil without design. Subsequent events soon proved that, although Charke possessed great talents as a musician, he had few other commendable qualities ; and, in fact, the marriage had not been celebrated a month, before she had cause to repent it. Some lingering hope, however, attached

her to a belief that when she had a child her husband would become better ; but it had an opposite effect, and she possessed none of the graces that render home agreeable. For some time she bore her misfortune patiently, but Charke's constant disregard of her anxieties had, in the end, their natural consequences. His loose and wild behaviour led her into extravagant imaginations, to which at all times she was perhaps naturally prone, and they soon separated.

In the mean time having been preparing herself for the stage, she was induced to make her debut on the last night in which Mrs. Oldfield performed, and on that occasion gave such promise of success as an actress, that both that excellent performer and her father gave her the most flattering testimonies of their approbation. Perhaps no author has ever spoken more simply of their young delight, than this gay, giddy, and eccentric heroine ; but she never realized the promise of her youth or the assurances of her early success. She describes herself as enjoying an ecstasy of heart as the time drew near when she was to come out ; and acknowledges, with simplicity, her chagrin in seeing her part announced, "By a young gentlewoman who had never appeared on any stage before," instead of with her own name. This melancholy disappointment operated on her spirits, and drew her into a great expense for coach-hire, in going about among her acquaintances to inform them that she indeed was the young gentlewoman who had been announced for Mademoiselle, in *The Provoked Wife*. In the second attempt, her name was in capitals, and she declares, that the perusal of it from the one end of the town to the other, was for the first week her constant business, both for the irrational delight of reading her name, and sometimes to hear strictures on herself, which, however, she says, were all to her advantage.

Her second part was Alicia, in which she found the audience as indulgent as at the first ; and her third was in *The Distressed Mother*. By this time experience had taught her more timidity than she had felt at first ; indeed, her tremour amounted in the third part to such a degree, that she would not have been surprised, had it been one morning announced to the town that she had died of a capital character.

Soon after *The Distressed Mother*, *George Barnwell* was produced, and Mrs. Charke, with great applause, performed Lucy, and fixed, of course, the taste for that character, to all future time. Her merit in this part was considered so remarkable, that her salary was raised by it from twenty to thirty shillings a-week. It is, however, not the design of this work to treat of all the characters that the parties performed ; but only to give some account of their general manner, and the parts in which they chiefly excelled, or which were peculiar to them.

Upon Mr. Highmore making a purchase in the theatre, there was an immediate revolt of the majority of the company to the new theatre in the Haymarket, of which her brother, Theophilus Cibber, was the manager, and under whom her salary was raised from thirty shillings to three pounds a-week.

Mrs. Charke, having joined Mr. Fleetwood, was now entering on

her destiny : she had some altercation with him almost immediately, and in consequence left the theatre ; but the manager, despite of a farce she wrote to turn him into ridicule, consented, at the request of her father, to receive her back. She did not, however, remain with him long, but went to Henry Fielding, who at that time was manager of the Haymarket theatre, where her salary was increased at least another pound.

At the time she was engaged with Mr. Fielding, she lodged in Oxenden-Street, and boarded with her sister. Being a sort of creature regarded as a favourite cat or monkey about the house, she does not appear to have been ever treated with much ceremony ; on the contrary, she was easily put off, with what reasonable people might not only have deemed an inconvenience but an affront. She was put into the worst apartment, which was becomingly furnished : her description of it in verse has more playfulness than elegance.

She left this airy mansion, and taking a shop in Long Acre, turned oil-woman and grocer. This whim proved successful ; every one of her acquaintances gave her their custom, and came to hear her talk largely of herself and other dealers. The rise and fall of sugars were her constant topic ; trading abroad and at home was as frequent in her mouth as her meals ; and to complete this new farce, she took in the papers to see what ships were come in or lost, who in the trade was bankrupt, or who advertised teas at the lowest prices ; and she used on these occasions to expatiate with great gravity on all the ills that people in trade are heirs to, ending with a comment on those dealers who were endeavouring to undersell the general trade, shrewdly prognosticating that they would never be quiet till they had rendered the article of tea a mere drug, and that poor Mrs. Charke and many more in the business should be obliged to give it up—an injury to commerce in general ! Her stock, gentle reader, did not perhaps exceed ten or a dozen pounds at a time, but it furnished her with as much discourse as if she had a whole ship-lading in her shop. Then as to oils, to be sure she was the first in the line, for though she never kept a gallon of a sort in the house, she used to write to country chapmen, her numerous correspondents, to deal with her. Never was such a compound of simplicity and folly ; her medicine was sound and sober compared with her trade !

Upon due reflection, and having heard that children must creep before they walk, she justly considered that for the first year, until she had fairly established a universal trade, she, being a good horse-woman, should go the journeys herself, by which, no doubt, much money would be saved ; but unfortunately she could gain no country customers. As a proof of her talent for business it may be related that in selling a quarter of a hundredweight of lump sugar she evinced a degree of sagacity that has no parallel, not even in the bargain Moses Primrose made for the gross of green spectacles.

It was then customary, in buying lump sugars by the hundred, to be allowed a tret of six pounds extra. Poor Charlotte was so transported at hearing a friend ask for such a quantity, that forgetting the character of a grocer, and fancying herself the sugar-baker, she agreed to allow on the twenty-five pounds the half of the tret she

got on the hundred, alleging that was the custom in the trade when people dealt in large quantities. Her friend was so pleased with this liberality that she promised her all the custom she could bring, and if she had done much would in due time have shown her the way to prison.

After this notable affair, when the sugar-dealer was gone with her bargain, Charlotte, considering that her business was now on the increase, began to think it was necessary to provide a large pair of scales, to weigh by the hundredweight, and a huge beam to hang it upon. For that purpose she set out next morning, but she could meet with nothing of the kind, and returned home with a resolution to have a pair made.

The worthy woman who kept the house, on hearing that she had been endeavouring to make this needless purchase, inquired into the necessity for it; upon which Charlotte told her what had happened the day before, and mentioned with glee and triumph how liberal she had been in the allowance to her friend; but much to her consternation, the landlady, instead of commending her skill and dexterity, was like to strangle with laughter.

Links and flambeaux are a commodity belonging to the oil trade, and Charlotte dealt in them. One of those nocturnal illuminators who help the bewildered in the twilight, bought often from her: gratified by his custom, she sometimes gave him a dram, and one evening thanked him for using her shop; he bowed and smiled,—she curtsied, and he walked away backward; but he had not been long gone when she discovered, to her amazement, that all her brass weights had been stolen.

After this fracas she lost all relish for the business, and had some secret thoughts of shutting up shop; and finally she did so, and opened a grand puppet-show over the Tennis Court in St. James's-street, for which, after much ado, she got a licence. This show was a very fine thing of the kind, and for some time it was marvellously prosperous, but in the end it sustained a blight; and her husband, who had in the mean time gone to Jamaica, departed this life.

Being, partly in consequence of fatigue in exhibiting her show, indisposed, and obliged for some time to give it up, she quitted the Tennis Court, and took a house in Marsham Street, Westminster, where she lived quietly for some time. At last, recovering her spirits, she transported her dolls and puppets to Tunbridge Wells, but on arriving there found the ground pre-occupied, and was obliged soon after to return to London, where she let out her figures to a man who was chiefly employed in making them. In the end, the fashion proved to be transitory, so she sold the whole stock for twenty guineas, which had cost her nearly five hundred pounds!

She had not long parted with her images, when, being a widow, she was addressed by a worthy gentleman, and so closely pursued that she at last consented to a very secret alliance with him. But she was under obligations never to divulge his name: a misfortune from which she suffered extremely, for he soon after their union died, and left her with her daughter in a state of great necessity. This, however, is her own account of the matter; and the reader,

without much assistance to his sagacity, will discern, that no available reason is assigned for the mysterious concealment which she affected.

At the same time that she was exposed to all the consequences of this misfortune, she was arrested for a debt of seven pounds, at the instigation of a person whom she describes "a wicked, drunken woman;" and after some time, and various attempts to find bail, she was at last obliged to surrender. By this time such had been her conduct, that it appears she had been deserted by all her own friends and relations, and was fairly an adventuress on the town; at least, she does not appear to have applied to any of them in her distress, while she mentions that, as soon as it was known she was arrested, all the ladies, to the number of about a dozen or fourteen, who kept coffee-houses about Covent Garden, assembled and offered to ransom her; but although the debt was only seven pounds, they could not raise as much money among them all as would pay it and the costs. In the midst of these disasters, some of which are calculated to force a smile, one meets with occasional touches of the most pathetic nature.

The Garden ladies being unable to extricate poor Mrs. Charke from her "durance vile," she was compelled to abide in the officer's house in a state of the greatest anxiety, and to leave her child, who was then only eight years of age, unacquainted, at her lodgings, with her forlorn condition. About seven o'clock next morning she, however, dispatched a messenger to the unlucky creature, who came to her with overflowing eyes and a heart bursting with sorrow. After indulging for some time in mutual and unavailing grief, Mrs. Charke sat down and wrote eight and thirty letters before stirring from her seat; but they proved of no use. The poor little wench was the bearer of these imploring epistles, and neither ate nor drank till she had delivered them all. Not, however, to dwell on such details; in the course of the day the ladies who had visited her the night before called on her with the celebrated Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes, and with her aid contrived among them to raise money enough to procure her liberty.

At this period Mrs. Charke, who had been throughout life partial to men's attire and vocations, was dressed as a cavalier, and went by the name of Sir Charles. Her hat being rather gaudy for her condition, and being the mark by which the officer had known her, she was advised by him to exchange it for his old one which she did accordingly,

Having released her from captivity, her kind redeemers treated her with a joyous supper, and sent her home to her child with a guinea in her pocket, which they prevailed on her to accept as a present to her daughter.

During this period she had lodgings in Queen-street, and for some time, according to her own account, behaved with comparative propriety. She never made her appearance abroad but on Sunday, and had recourse to as many friends as she could muster for the support of her child and herself. But the girl took her parent's misfortunes so much to heart that she became dangerously ill. In this crisis her

brother, Theophilus, was so far moved by affection and compassion towards her, that he sent her an apothecary at his own expense. It is only the squalid and disgusting features of poverty that we see ; its cares and heart-hurts are hidden from our sympathy.

One Sunday, at this period, Mrs Charke went out to raise a little money for herself and the sick child by pledging a pair of handsome sleeve-buttons ; on her return, and asking the landlady how the child did, she received a satisfactory answer ; but on entering the room, she found the unhappy creature stretched on the floor in strong convulsions. She flew upon the child in distraction, lifted it up, then threw it down, rushed into the street, and by her screams drew a crowd around, to whom she related that her child was dead, and that she was in despair.

In the midst of this scene of sorrow, a neighbour, who lived next door, hearing of her misfortunes, in a genteel and tender manner offered her his assistance unasked. He sent immediately a letter of condolence, inclosing the never-failing comforter of man, and continued for some time after to send regularly to inquire for the child's health, with the same respectful regard which might have been expected had the mother possessed that affluence which she had at one time enjoyed.

It happened, very opportunely for our heroine, that this neighbour had a back-door into his house, by which she could visit him unperceived, which she often did, and by his kindness, received support for herself and the child ; and, as soon as her necessities came to be generally known, her assistance from the players does credit at once to their humanity and munificence ; but there appears to have been ever a vein of eccentricity about her which rendered the best acts of their kindness often nugatory.

Mrs. Charke, although a clever and intelligent person, had something about her which always marred her intentions. She was now a regular nocturnal bird, and, as the health of her child improved, issued forth by owl-light in quest of adventures ; and as plays were often acted at the Tennis Court, she sometimes went thither to see if any character was wanted at the great slaughter-house of dramatic poetry. On one occasion *The Recruiting Officer* was to be performed there, and Captain Plume was so unfortunate that he came at five o'clock to say he had not been able to learn a line of his part. Mrs. Charke did not venture to tell them she could speak it, being apprehensive that the well-known sound of her voice would betray her to some of the bailiffs, by whom she was at that time pursued ; but in the end the question was put to her, and she answered in the affirmative : resolving, however, to make the best terms she could, she pretended she had nothing ready—being in want of white stockings and a clean shirt ; though, in case of a chance, she had all those things in her pocket. After some delay, seeing they could not go on without her, she was engaged at a guinea. After the play, the better to escape detection, she was obliged to change clothes with a person of low degree, by whose happy rags, and the covert of night, she reached her home in safety, where she rewarded her accommodating friend with a shilling.

The sensation of this adventure had not subsided, when she was applied to by a fantastic mortal, Jockey Adams, famous for dancing the Jockey dance to the tune of "A horse to Newmarket." Gaping for a crust, she snapped at the first offered, and went with him to a town within four miles of London, where a very extraordinary occurrence took place to Mrs. Charke, who then wore men's apparel, and appeared, by the discretion which she maintained in that capacity, to be in truth a well-bred gentleman. In this situation a young lady of fortune fell in love with her, an assignation was made, and after a very farcical interview, she found herself under the necessity of disclosing her sex, to quench the flames of her mistress.

Scarcely was this well over, when she was exposed to a new agitation of a different kind. A paltry fellow, who had been sometimes a supernumerary about the theatres, forged what she styles "a most villainous lie upon her." He asserted that she hired a fine bay gelding, and borrowed a pair of pistols, with which she encountered her father in Epping Forest, where she stopped his chariot, and upbraiding him, obtained his purse. The story soon reached her ear, and she was greatly exasperated; the recital threw her into a rage, from which she did not recover for more than a month. The evening after she had heard the report, she was placed behind a screen in the room where the fellow was to be; the lie was retold, she rushed from her covert, and being armed on purpose with a thick oaken plant, knocked him down, and had she not been prevented, would have killed him on the spot.

Her misfortunes were not, however, beyond the remedy of hope. Though she had grievously offended her father, yet, as he was an indulgent, good-natured man, she still cherished some expectation of being reconciled to him. This induced her, when she had published the first part of her memoirs, to acknowledge her errors, and beseech his clemency, but he returned her letter unopened—a circumstance which affected her in an extraordinary manner. It did not, as might have been expected, produce a sudden gust of passion, but sank into her heart, and preyed upon it with the slow and eating fire of grief and despair, ending in a fever, which long consumed her spirits, and was never effectually overcome.

But to return to the narrative. After the love-lorn lady had retired from the town where she disclosed her unhappy passion, the whole gang of the strollers clandestinely removed themselves under the cloud of night to a neighbouring village, into which, about six o'clock on a Sunday morning, they made their triumphal entry. The landlord, who happened, luckily for them, to be an indolent, good-natured man, seeing so large a company and such boxes come to his house, easily dispensed with the oddity of their arrival, and called out lustily for his maid and daughter to set on the great pot for the buttock of beef, and to make a fine fire to roast the loin of veal, and ordered the hostler to help up with the boxes, which were very weighty, being packed with scabbardless swords and sticks of departed mops, which had been exalted into tragedy truncheons.

In this town the players lived at rack and manger, but their trade failing they were, before a week was over, obliged to make a moon-light flitting.



With a solitary shilling Mrs. Charke went to London, and took a lodging in Little Turnstile, Holborn ; but being soon inquired for, she set out the same day from town for Dartford, which she reached in a dreadful shower of rain about eight o'clock in the evening. She played that night ; but having caught cold became hoarse, and in consequence was turned off the next day with half-a-crown. She then returned to London, where, on account of her hoarseness, she had no way of getting her bread, and was reduced to the necessity of pledging her own and her child's clothes for support. Before she began to recover her voice they were stripped to a bare change.

As soon as she was capable of speaking she had another twilight ramble in quest of employment. In this adventure she went to play a part in Gravel Lane, where she met with a woman who told her she had scenes and clothes in limbo for two guineas, and if she could propose any means for their recovery, she would make Mrs. Charke the manager of her company. Accordingly, all devices were immediately put into action, and the money was borrowed, the goods redeemed, and next morning they were off with a few hands for Gravesend. There they played with some success, and thence went to Harwich, where they were also prosperous. But, unfortunately, the lady's husband was cast at Newgate for transportation, and they were obliged to break up their party, while she proceeded to that dismal castle to take leave of him before he set forward on his travels.

In the mean time, though it has not been particularly noticed, the courteous reader cannot have been so ignorant of the world as not to know that in all this time Mrs. Charke was improving in her education, and the result soon manifested itself. Finding herself thus again thrown adrift on the world, she had no other way of raising the wind but by paying a visit of gratitude, in fact, of beggary, to the good-natured ladies who had so compassionately released her from her first arrest.

Among other distressful evening patrols which she made at this time was a visit to her brother, who kindly compassionated her wretchedness by putting half-a-crown in her hand, and invited her to dine with him next day at a friend's house. Out of this arrangement she was introduced as a man to a noble lord, who was particularly nice in respect to the person he required. At this time his lordship kept a mistress in his house : when there was company she dined with Mrs. Charke ; and when they were entirely by themselves, Mrs. Charke was often permitted to dine with his Lordship and his favourite.

In this situation the time of our heroine passed comfortably, but, at the instigation of some of his Lordship's friends, she was discharged, and again reduced to sorrow and destitution. Shame encompassed her, life became a burden, and she began to desire to die. When poverty throws us beyond the reach of pity, our condition is like that of the poor wretch clothed with rags in a frosty morning ; no effort can make comfort.

In this juncture she was fortunately inspired with adequate resolution. She took a neat lodging in a small street facing Red-

lion-square, and wrote a letter to a friend describing her hapless situation ; in the course of a quarter-of-an-hour his bounty enabled her to proceed to Newgate-market, where she purchased a quantity of pork, which she converted into sausages, and, with her daughter, set out to dispose of them, and proved eminently successful. In this affair she still continued to wear the dress of a man, but for a reason which she has never divulged ; perhaps protection.

When she had sunk into the condition of a sausage-dealer, and was in other respects so humiliated, it could hardly be imagined that she could fall lower ; but an accident taught her that the measure of her afflictions was not yet full. Soon after setting up in that capacity she fell into low health, insomuch that she was chiefly indebted for assistance to her child, and though she restricted herself in every indulgence, she was still obliged to encroach on her slender finances, till she was reduced to her last three pounds of pork. These she left nicely prepared for sausages on a table covered up, while she went forth to breathe a little fresh air in the fields ; but when she returned—oh, disastrous chance !—a hungry dog had most remorselessly entered and devoured all her remaining stock.

It would be to insult misery to indulge in the natural levity that this misfortune was calculated to excite ; for though in itself it may seem to have been a slight mischance, it was to the sufferers a great distress. Mrs. Charke and her child stared at one another in silence ; they sat down with despondency, conceiving that starvation must be their fate, having at that time neither meat, money, nor friends ; their week's lodging would expire next day, and a regular visit from their landlord was inevitable.

After having sighed away her senses for her departed three pounds of pork, and thinking of her landlord, Mrs. Charke walked out, incapable of reflecting on her distress. She had not, however, proceeded far, when she met with an old gentlewoman, whom she had not seen for many years, who recognized her at once, and inquired why she was so sad and clothed in man's apparel : this having been explained discreetly, when they parted, the good lady slipped five shillings into her hand, on which she went home, paid her lodging, and next morning quitted it.

It has often been remarked, that if instances of kind-heartedness and magnanimity are to be sought for, they will chiefly be found among the poor and the friendless. On retiring from her lodgings in the neighbourhood of Red-lion-square, this unfortunate woman had nowhere to lay her head ; all around, the world was a desert. In this helplessness a young woman, who was herself in indigent circumstances, invited the wretched mother and her child to take up their abode with her, and treated them with great charity at a time when, but for this beautiful instance of humane generosity, her child must have begged her bread ; for she was then herself ill of a fever of the mind, and incapable of lending her advice or assistance. After some days the senses of the miserable mother returned, and she made her situation known to the nobleman whom she had formerly served, who immediately sent her a piece of gold, and expressed concern and sympathy for her situation. From this time she gradually recovered.

At this period Mr. Yeates opened his new Wells, and she was engaged by him as a singer for a musical entertainment which he then brought forward. She subsequently obtained leave from Mr. Yeates to quit the Wells for four days, during which she appeared with great éclat at Bartholomew Fair.

Being thus again in obvious employment, her creditors became alert and importunate ; all she owed did not amount to five-and-twenty pounds, but it occasioned her as much perplexity as so many thousands. She was obliged to leave Mr. Yeates, to conceal herself from the eyes of those to whom she was indebted, and she retired to Petticoat-lane, Whitechapel, where she joined a master of legerdemain, and assumed the name of Brown. She, however, did not relish this life long, and, in her jeopardy, she addressed her uncle, imploring his aid, and entreating him to advance her as much money as would enable her to set up a public-house. In this affair she acted with her wonted frankness : she told him that she would not borrow the money because it might never be repaid, she therefore fairly asked him for a gift, and she was not disappointed. He wrote to her to take a house, and that he would advance the requisite money.

She obeyed his directions, and being ever in a hurry from the hour of her birth, she took the first she saw with a bill on the window in Drury Lane—a house that had been irregularly and indecently kept. Her uncle was, however, as good as his promise : he advanced the money, and she posted away to her creditor who had a writ against her, which she settled, refusing, however, to pay the costs. Having settled with him, she then flew to the brokers' to buy household furniture ; and, in less than three hours, her house was thoughtlessly furnished : but this affair was attended with so many extraordinary proceedings, that I cannot blame any one for being thrown into astonishment at her conduct. As soon as she had clustered an indistinguishable parcel of goods into her house, she resolved to sleep there that night. Beds were accordingly put up, but, by the time matters were in order, she was obliged to forego her intention, for it was near six o'clock in the morning. In other respects she managed not with more method ; in two days the house was opened, and, according to custom on such occasions, she gave an infinity of ham, and beef, and veal, to every soul who came and called for even a glass of brandy. In the course of twenty-four hours she ran out nearly seven pounds, and thought she was driving a roaring trade.

The next step which Charlotte took towards getting a large estate was the profitable custom of several strolling-players, with whom, though they had no money she thought herself obliged to deal liberally, (as they styled themselves comedians,) until they had it in their power to pay, which they one and all expected soon to do. She had also another expedient scarcely less salutary for making a fortune ; she let three several rooms to as many persons, and some notion may be formed of their respectability by their fate—one of them narrowly escaped being hanged, another was reduced to common beggary, and the third was transported for life. This was not all. The water was laid into her cellar, and she never suspected that her tap ran as often as the water-cock : her beer was carried in pails to the two-pair of

stairs floor, and the whole house was in a constant thunder-storm. Hints of what was going on began to glimpse out, and our heroine soon found that her lodgers had sometimes taken violent fancies to her very candlesticks and saucepans ; that her pewter shrank, and coals diminished ; and that, as she kept an eating-house, there was often a hue and cry after an imaginary dog that ran away with three parts of a joint of meat. In a word, she was obliged to shut up shop ; and going in her male attire to an old friend, she was, by her assistance, translated into a waiter at the King's-head, Mary-le-bone, then kept by a Mrs. Don.

Mrs. Don was at first greatly pleased with her appearance, but was fearful that her service would be too hard, and admonished her to seek a less robust employment. However, all her arguments were overturned by the plausible and good reasons of our heroine, who in the end was accepted ; a little demur, however, arose, when she understood she had a child ; but this too, in the end was overcome, and the waiter was admitted to her board. At last Sunday came round, and Mrs. Charke began to shake in her shoes, fearing that as the house was generally much frequented on that day, she might be discovered ; but all passed off well. In the week-days, business, though not so brisk as on Sundays, was still good, but it left her leisure to attend to the garden, in the work of which she showed so much sagacity that good Mrs. Don could not make enough of her ; in short, an indirect overture was made to her by a kinswoman of Mrs. Don, and marriage was only prevented by the fact of her being a woman coming to light.

She then attached herself to her brother, and having sown some of her wild oats, became a regular performer, and assisted to bring out her daughter. But the old man Colley Cibber, who was greatly displeased, interfered to her prejudice.

Her distress and imprudence now took a new turn ; she was again reduced to great difficulties, but they were ultimately softened in their rigours by a present of a few pounds which she received from the Duke of Montague. After that she engaged herself at a guinea per diem to handle Punch at a puppet-show, which was kept by a Mr. Russel, for the higher classes, at Hickford's great room in Brewers-street,—a grand affair, some of the female figures being ornamented with real diamonds lent for that purpose by ladies of quality. This way of life was, however, like all others which she had pursued, evanescent ; Mr. Russel was arrested, thrown into prison, became insane, and finally an idiot. In this unfortunate situation, Mrs. Charke, hearing he was moved into the Fleet, called one day to see him, and found to her horror and consternation, that the unfortunate man was just laid in his coffin.

After the shock of this sad spectacle was over, she reproached the woman who had shown her up without telling her he was dead ; but at the same time she expressed her thankfulness in seeing he was provided with so handsome a winding-sheet and coffin. "Oh, Madam," replied the prison-hag, "when a debtor dies without effects he must be interred by the parish ; your friend must be turned over to a parish-shell, for the indulgence of being buried otherwise renders

the Warden of the Fleet liable for the debts of the deceased." This may have been the case, but surely the law cannot to this day be disgraced by the continuation of such an atrocity?

After leaving the prison and the corpse of her friend, and having dried her cheeks and eyes, it occurred to our heroine that his puppets might be had on reasonable terms, and that by them she could not fail to realize a handsome fortune; but on going to make an arrangement with his landlord, she found he had valued them at sixty guineas, money down, which was beyond her means, and so ended the scheme.

After this she remained about town till Bartholomew Fair was over, when she went into the country, and remained nearly nine years, the most remarkable of which were spent as a strolling-player, during which her daughter married one of the party, and in process of time came to be lady of an independent country company.

The sketches which Mrs. Charke gives of her adventures as a stroller are curiously amusing; odd and remarkable in many particulars, they are yet not related without her characteristic humour. "I have seen," says she, "an Emperor as drunk as a Lord, and a Lord as elegant as a ticket-porter,—a Queen with one ruffle, and a Lord Townley without shoes. This last circumstance reminds me of the Queen, in *The Spanish Friar*, once playing without stockings, which, however, was caused by her own good nature; her Majesty observing Torismond to have a dirty pair with above twenty holes in sight, and her own legs not being so much exposed to view, kindly stripped them of a pair of fine cotton stockings, and lent them to the hero." This, however, is no overcharged picture of what often happens among strollers. I was once myself a witness to a three-legged pot-doing cauldron in *Macbeth*, and instead of sinking into the earth, according to the text, deliberately walking off, pulled by a string tied to one of its feet.

Being very unwell at Cirencester, she was advised, after getting a little better, to try horsemanship, and adopting this advice, she soon borrowed a horse for herself and another for her friend, the magnificent stockingless queen. The person who furnished the horses was a reverend-looking elder about sixty years of age, with beautiful curling hair, and a florid complexion, that bespoke admiration and respect. His temper was moral and pleasing, his aspect agreeable, and his company entertaining, with which he often obliged our heroine while her friend was at the theatre. After riding out two or three times, the old gentleman perceiving her to grow better, courteously made her a present of the horse, and persuaded a young fellow he called his nephew to give the other to her friend, and finally induced the two ladies to determine on leaving the stage. But all this was deceit; it turned out that the horse-jockeys were old game. They were detected in their frauds, and in less than a year the old man was dangled into the other world, and the young one died raving mad in a prison near London.

From Cirencester the players went to Chippenham, and after experiencing the wonted disasters of the stroller's life, Mrs. Charke passed to Tiverton, in Devonshire, where she joined, with her

friend and daughter, another party, under Mr. and Mrs. Elrington, with whom her success was only such as might be expected from their common poverty, and the expedients to which such adventurers are always reduced. It is, however, impossible to follow her through all the vicissitudes of a stroller's life, nor would they merit the reader's attention ; they were with her as they have been with others, and are already sufficiently well known. The varieties of individual character may have produced cases of inflexion and exception, but the accidents which befell our heroine as a stroller were not of that kind : it is more in what happened to her when she was not a stroller that her fate is peculiar, and therefore I shall confine my attention chiefly to what may be regarded as her private adventures, rather than to those incidental to her profession, which, however, I must say, were abundantly eccentric of their kind, and sometimes full of humour. One, however, distressing enough at the time, I must not omit.

After traversing the country in the course of a second reunion with Mr. and Mrs. Elrington, they came to Minchin Hampton, where they were exposed to great jeopardy. At that time it happened the Coroner supported a relation in a most nefarious course of practice, by apprehending all persons over whom he conceived the law gave him any authority ; and this ridiculous power he carried to a most oppressive extent. Under it he committed the players to prison, and played so many fantastic tricks, that if he did not make the angels weep, he was often the cause of great vexation to those who fell into his clutches. In the end, by the assistance of the lord of the manor, Mrs. Charke and her friends escaped from his talons, but the troubles she had undergone made her resolve to quit the stage, and try some other course of life. This determination was forced upon her by the pressure of circumstances, but there was still little wisdom in the mode she proposed to carry it into effect.

With that discretion which distinguished her conduct through life, she resolved to settle at Chepstow, and turn pastrycook there, without a shilling in the universe ! Accordingly, having taken a house in that town, she threw herself entirely on her friends, and moved onward in her scheme. An oven was constructed, but there was not a single penny to purchase a faggot to light it, and pies and their materials were equally scarce. However, nothing daunted, our heroine made her case known, and to baking she was enabled to go ; and partly through pity and curiosity she absolutely took twenty shillings in the way of trade in the course of the first day. But the promise of this prosperity was only a glimpse of sunshine : the natural aspect of her fortunes was lowering ; her courage however was not dismayed, even when this glimpse of brightness passed away.

She soon saw that she could not hope to succeed by her pastry, and she resolved to add to it another more lucrative branch of business. She went in one of her hurries and bought a sow with pig, but after keeping it nearly three months, expecting it would bring forth, the brute proved to be an old barrow, and she was in consequence glad to sell it to a butcher for a shilling or two less than she originally gave for it. She had, however, by this time, to console her, a garden

well stored with fruits of all kinds, which amply promised to indemnify her for the disappointment sustained by the sow ; but just as the fruit was nearly ripe, a pack of wretches in one night robbed her garden and broke down many of her trees.

Finding she was not likely to succeed at Chepstow, she was assisted by some of her friends to remove with the necessary utensils for the pastrycook's shop to a little place called Pell, within five miles of the port of Bristol. The place itself is, according to her description, not unpleasant, but is inhabited, or rather infested, with the scum and dregs of the human race. "To be short," says she, "the villainies of these wretches are of so heinous and unlimited a nature, they render the place so unlike any other part of the habitable world, that I can compare it only to the antichamber of that abode in the next life we are admonished to avoid, by leading a good one here." And yet for nearly six months Mrs. Charke remained with her female companion in this place. Here she took a little shop, and being then in man's attire, and under the assumed name of Brown, she set out in a grand style, and put over her door in large, legible, permanent, and conspicuous characters and words at length,—*"Brown, Pastry-cook, from London."* But she declares, that in all the time she remained there, she could not charge herself with ever having attempted to spoil the ingredients of a single tart. The summer-time, however, was the season of her trade, and she had no cause to complain ; but when the blustering weather set in, had not an uncle of her friend died and left her a legacy, they would have been reduced to the most woful extremities.

On receiving this letter, it was shown to their landlord hoping that he would lend Mrs. Charke a guinea to bear their charges to the relict of the deceased, who lived in Oxfordshire ; but "the incredulous blockhead," as she says, conceived the letter was a forgery, and contrived as a device to get a guinea to run away with. He was, however, in error, and made a thousand awkward excuses for his unkindness when they had received the money. In the mean time, however, they were reduced to a sore pinch : still the bravery of our heroine was not to be subdued by adversity ; she consulted on her pillow what was best to be done, and her friend agreed that what she had determined was the best, especially as there were only two little difficulties in the way. They agreed to go for the money, but, first, they had not a single groat between them in the world ; and, secondly, Mrs. Charke was in want of a hat, in consequence of having pledged her's at Bristol,—for she went all this time as a man ;—yet notwithstanding these impediments, they resolved to set out together, and did so.

On reaching Bristol, Mrs. Charke, at the first word, though without her hat, raised enough to pay for their immediate wants, and she borrowed a covering for her unthinking head from a smart young journeyman who lived in the same house where they lodged for that night. Next day, at the hour of five, they set out for Bath, where they encountered some obstacles, which, however, our heroine soon overcame, by giving her landlady her waistcoat for payment of her day's score ; she, however, redeemed it next morning by a contribution raised among the players,

Being thus empowered by the help of a little cash, the legatees set out from Bath to Oxfordshire, and in three days reached the happy spot where they were supplied, in the form of their legacy, with that opiate for grief of which the want had made many a tedious night wakeful. They then returned to Bristol, where they met some of the Pell gentry, and learned that it was supposed they had run away. The borrowed hat was then returned to the owner ; our heroine released her own ; the landlord was paid his rent, and no creatures could have been more honest ; but the legacy was exhausted, and, as Mrs. Charke says of herself, when it was so, she was no more regarded " than a dead cat." But still she was unsubdued.

She then sat down and wrote a little tale, which filled up the first and second columns of a newspaper, and got an acquaintance to introduce her to the printer, who engaged her, at a small pittance to correct the press. Having thus secured something to fiddle on, she ran back from Bristol to Pell, exhorted her friend to come away, and leaving all to the landlord, to whom they were indebted eighteen shillings, she hastened to enter on her literary career.

It did not, however, last above a month, when finding it impossible to subsist on what she received, and the printer being unable to increase her wages, she applied to the players for a benefit. This proved an unlucky speculation, for the house was filled with promises to overflowing, but instead of realising five-and-twenty pounds, as she expected, she was involved to the extent of four or five pounds, and obliged to shift her camp without beat of drum.

She then joined her daughter's party at Wells, where she received a letter from her brother, informing her that Mr. Simpson, of Bath, was inclined to engage her as his prompter. This offer she embraced with avidity, and was kindly received, but the situation proved more troublesome than her health or temper could endure ; she was obliged to give it up, and after several characteristic expedients, she set out by Devizes for London, and by a very devious course arrived there in due time, where she began the publication of her memoirs in numbers, on the 19th April 1755, ultimately resolving to open a magnificent academy for young persons ambitious of acquiring eminence on the stage. But, like all her other schemes, this was conceived without adequate consideration—indeed, it was conceived with less probability than some of her most absurd projects, and it of course fell to the ground.

What became of her for several years after is not very obvious, nor indeed till towards the close of her life, when we find her in possession of a public house at Islington. It is certain, that about the year 1755 she had prepared a novel for the press, and Mr. White of Dublin accompanied his friend, a bookseller, to hear her read it.

Her house was then a thatched hovel, in the purlieus of Clerkenwell Bridewell, on the way to Islington, not far from the New River head. Mr. White and his companion having at last reached her door, and being admitted by a domestic, a tall, meagre, ragged figure with a blue apron before her, who spoke with a solemn voice and a hungry smile. The first object that presented itself was a dresser, clean it must be confessed, and furnished with three or four



delf plates, and underneath an earthen pipkin, and a black pitcher with a snip out of its mouth. To the right of the dresser sat the mistress of the mansion, on a maimed chair, under the mantelpiece, with a fire sufficient to put her visitors in mind of starvation. On one hob sat a monkey chattering, on the other a tabby cat of a melancholy aspect, and on the flounce of his lady's dingy petticoat reclined a dog, almost only the skeleton of one. He raised his shaggy head, and staring with bleared eyes, saluted the strangers with a snarl. A magpie was perched on her chair, and on her lap lay a mutilated pair of bellows; their pipe was gone, but they served as a succedaneum for a writing-desk, on which lay displayed her hopes in the shape of the manuscript of her novel. Her ink-stand was a broken tea-cup; her pen was worn to the stump,—she had but one. A rough deal board, with three supporters, was brought for the convenience of the visitors, and after they were accommodated, they entered upon business.

The work was read—and she read it beautifully—remarks were made, and thirty guineas demanded for the copyright. The squalid hand-maiden looked with astonishment at the amount of the demand. The extortionate bookseller, offered five pounds; some altercation ensued, but after it the man of trade doubled his offer: matters in the end were duly accommodated; the lady stipulating for fifty copies in addition to the money. This appears to have been the last important transaction of her many-coloured life, nor indeed did she live very long afterwards, for she died on the 6th of April 1760.

Biography presents few cases similar to the extraordinary life of Mrs. Charke,—a person of considerable talent, quick in the perception of impropriety in others, but entirely under the government of the most irrational impulses. The English language affords no fit term to describe her conduct, but the Scottish has a word appropriate in DAFT.

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### MRS. GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY.

THIS lady is as much celebrated by her letters concerning herself, as by her professional excellence, and yet they are generally believed to have been written by Alexander Bicknell, better known as the editor of Carver's Travels in Africa. They are not, however, spurious; she is supposed to have furnished the materials, and must be held responsible for the chronological errors which impair their merit. She was born in the town of Fingal in Ireland, on St. George's day, 1731, and was baptized by the name of Georgiana; but after she had grown up, it was discovered that she was entered in the parish register as having been christened George Anne. Though she bore the name of her mother's husband, she was really the child of Lord Trawley, and born under circumstances which justify me in saying, that her adventures began before she came into the world.

Her mother was the daughter of a wealthy farmer in the neighbour-

hood of Maidstone, and after some distressing family affairs, was placed at a boarding-school in Queen Square, London, by Mrs. Godfrey, a sister of the great Duke of Marlborough, whence she was induced to elope with Lord Tyrawley, a young, accomplished, but dissipated nobleman.

Having carried his prize to his apartments in Somerset House, she was treated with the same respect as if she had been really married to his Lordship, and actually assumed his name. She had not, however, been long in this illusion, when his Lordship was ordered to join his regiment in Ireland. Their parting was becomingly pathetic, for they had given all for love; but as soon as he reached Dublin, he found it expedient to pay his addresses to a daughter of the Earl of Blessington, to mend his shattered fortunes, and married her. In this, having acted without principle, the Earl was so indignant when he came to hear the truth, that he would make no settlement on them, and Tyrawley was justly disappointed. Being, however, a young man of talent, he solicited public employment, and was sent Ambassador to Lisbon. There, after the lapse of two years, the mother of our heroine joined him, and on her arrival was placed by his Lordship in the family of an English merchant, where she received the visits of his Lordship, and where, being unacquainted that he had solaced himself with another mistress, her time passed in agreeable tranquillity. It happened, however, that a Captain Bellamy, master of a ship consigned to the merchant, happened to become so enamoured of her, that he won her heart chiefly by informing her of the minister's new mistress; and in revenge she accepted his hand, and sailed with him as the legal Mistress Bellamy to Ireland. Soon, however, after their arrival, she gave birth, greatly to his astonishment, to our heroine, for he had never suspected that there had been an intimacy to such an effect with Lord Tyrawley!

His Lordship believing that Mrs. Bellamy had run away to Ireland without tie, and in the wantonness of nature, and expecting that a child might be born to him ordered it immediately on its birth to be taken from her. Ultimately, when about two years old, George Anne was carried to the barracks at Dublin, by the lady of the Adjutant of his Lordship's regiment, in whose care she had been placed; and when she had nearly attained the age of four years, the Adjutant received directions from Lord Tyrawley to send her to France.

Whilst in London, on the way to the Continent, the maid-servant who had the care of her, happening to see her mother's name in the playbills of Covent Garden, thought she could not be an unacceptable visitor, if she took the child to pay her respects to her. Accordingly, they went to Mrs. Bellamy's lodgings; but on running delighted to her mother, the actress, for Mrs. Bellamy was now on the stage, pushed away the child, exclaiming, after looking at her, "My God! what have you brought me here? This goggle-eyed, splatter-faced, gabbart mouthed wretch is not my child! Take her away."

After a few necessary preparations, Miss Bellamy was placed at

Boulogne, in the Convent of the Nunciates, in the lower town, where she had not been long when a nun was buried in the walls for incontinency. Every reader recollects so well the striking description of this fearful ceremony of punishment, in the poem of *Marmion*, that it need not be described here ; but so horrid a penalty, and the dirtiness of the house, occasioned our heroine to be removed to the Ursulines, in the upper town, where she remained till she had reached her eleventh year, at which period she was brought to England.

On reaching Dover, she was met by one Duvall, who had once been a domestic of Lord Tyrawley, and with whom she was to reside during the absence of his Lordship, who was still abroad, but every day expected. This Duvall had a neighbour of the name of Jones, who, at the solicitations of his wife, had opened a china-shop. Mrs. Jones was the daughter of an apothecary in Westminster, and was well versed in the fashions and amusements of the gay world. Having received a genteel education, she spoke French badly, of course, and could invent with great facility interesting additions to the lies of the day. She had a good address, abounded in small-talk, understood flattery charmingly ; and all her female customers were, in consequence, delighted with this fascinating lady.

Our heroine, during her frequent visitations to the shop of Mrs. Jones, became acquainted with most of the nobility who frequented it. But this pleasure was at length disturbed by the long-wished-for arrival of Lord Tyrawley.

His Lordship received his daughter in the kindest manner, but his Portuguese mistress, who had several children of her own, became her enemy, so obviously, that the acute young lady perceiving the nature of Donna Aura's heart, persuaded his Lordship to place her again with Mrs. Jones, where every thing went happily for some time, until she became indisposed ; when Lord Tyrawley, for the benefit of fresh air, was induced on her account to take a little box in Bushy Park, to which he removed his whole family, consisting of his Lordship, his tawny Dulcinea, three girls, all by different mothers, and George Anne. The boys were sent to school.—Here his Lordship's fondness for her became unbounded. He thought he could discern in her features a perfect resemblance of himself, and anticipated when her wit would become as brilliant as his own, for he was acknowledged in that respect to possess uncommon talent.

Lord Tyrawley having prohibited George Anne from reading *Cassandra*, the only romance in his library, she laid her hands on Pope's *Homer*, and learnt the first three books by rote, when she solicited his Lordship to introduce her to the author—as Pope of Twickenham should deservedly be considered. This he indulgently, after many applications, consented to do. The day was fixed ; away they went to the poet's dwelling, she full of great anticipations, and big with the thought of the important part she was to perform. The carriage stopped, the door was opened, and they were ushered into the presence of the great man, who, immediately on seeing her, rang the bell. The housekeeper answered it—"Take Miss," said Pope, "show her the gardens, and give her as much fruit as she can eat !"

Such a result humbled the young lady beyond all measure ; she was wroth with the innocent housekeeper, who did not remain long with her, but left her to devise a most effectual plan of revenge, no less than a resolution never to read the poet's works again, but wholly to attach herself to Dryden's translation of Virgil. While ruminating on this great machination, the carriage was announced, and on reaching it she found seated, with Lord Tyrawley, the famous Earl of Chesterfield ; and his Lordship's piquant conversation amply repaid her in the way to Bushy Park for all the contumely she had sustained from the poet.

Some time after, Lord Tyrawley being appointed Ambassador to Russia, one of the ladies of quality with whom she had formed an acquaintance at the shop of Mrs. Jones, invited her, during his Lordship's absence, to stay with her : an invitation gladly accepted, and to which his Lordship readily consented, on condition that she should not see her mother. But he had not been long on his mission, when enticed by the maid by whom she had been originally introduced to her mother, she left her splendid associations to reside with her. Lord Tyrawley immediately stopped his allowance for her support. This decided her destiny, and her imprudent mother saw, when it was too late, that she had sacrificed the permanent interests of her child. Perhaps, humanely speaking, there was, after all, less to blame on her part than in the proud sternness of the father. Impatience was the greatest fault, both of the mother and daughter—as it is of the unfortunate of mankind in general ; for, although it cannot be denied that there is a good luck in destiny, it is no less true that, if a man can afford to wait, he will in the end attain his desires.

Among other friendships which the mother had formed about this period, was an intercourse of a very intimate kind with a Mrs. Jackson, who had come from India for the education of her daughters, and who resided at Twickenham. She invited Mrs. Bellamy and her daughter to spend some time with her, and the invitation was accepted. One day, while staying with this lady, she happened to be walking with our heroine, when they met Mrs. Woffington, the distinguished actress, who immediately renewed a theatrical acquaintance with Mrs. Bellamy, and invited them both to spend some time with her at her house at Teddington. During their stay with her, Miss Bellamy formed some acquaintance with the most eminent actors of that time ; and while the two ladies remained with Mrs. Woffington a play was got up. The piece was *The Distressed Mother*, and the part of Andromache fell to our heroine in which she acquitted herself with distinction ; but, as this was not an appearance on a public stage, it is proper to reserve what is requisite to be said of her powers until that event.

Upon returning to Twickenham, they found their friend Mrs. Jackson so ill that her physician advised her to change the air, and she removed, in consequence, to Henrietta Street, where the mother and daughter consented to become her guests. At this period the former had occasion frequently to call on Rich the manager, on business, and when she did was always accompanied by George Anne, between whom and his daughters an agreeable intimacy was formed.

One evening the young ladies, among themselves, proposed to act Othello, and our heroine was to play the Moor. In due time accordingly, their preparations reached a rehearsal ; and as they were only amusing themselves, Miss Bellamy gave full scope to her voice, and was overheard by Mr. Rich, who declared he had never heard a better ; and, among other compliments, told her, that if she would turn her thoughts to the stage, she would make one of the best actresses in the world, and he would be happy to engage her. Mr. Rich, however, like the ordinary managers of the theatre, was not an eminent judge ; indeed, it was the opinion of the players, that he was not a judge at all, but was only one of those sort of people who get into certain situations no one can explain how. This eulogium, however, had the effect, in her deserted condition, of turning her attention to the stage as a means of subsistence. Indeed, when the tenour and tendency of her fortunes are considered, it seems as if no series of events ever more obviously dovetailed into each other than those of her life, to accomplish that consummation. She consulted with her mother upon what Mr. Rich had said, and the result, in a short time after, was an engagement with him, concluded when she was just fourteen.

At that time her figure was elegant, and her voice powerful ; gay, light, and graceful, of inexhaustible spirits, and possessed of some humour, the happiest auguries promised her success, and in the character of Monimia, then a favourite with the public, she came out under the auspices of youth, beauty, and emulation.

Being prepared for her part, Rich thought the time was now arrived when he should introduce her to Quin. After waiting some time at the mouth of the lion's den, as the other performers denominated Mr. Quin's dressing-room, they were at length admitted ; for except with Ryan, he kept himself aloof from the other players, and seldom mixed with them but in professional duty.

Quin no sooner heard Rich propose that Miss Bellamy should appear in the character of Monimia, than, with the most sovereign contempt, he cried out, "It will not do, Sir;" upon which Rich surprised at his plainness, retorted, "It shall do, Sir." After some farther pungent altercation, Quin said to her, "Child, I would advise you to play Serina before you think of Monimia." This sarcasm nettled her, and she animatedly replied, "If I did, Sir, I should never live to play the Orphan." Still, however, he insisted on the impropriety of a child attempting the character, and concluded with threatening, that if Rich persisted in his resolution, he would declare to the public his opinion, and would not attend the rehearsals. To reason with Quin was unavailing after he had committed himself so far, and Rich led the trembling novice away, cheering her, however, aloud, that let who would oppose, he was resolved to protect her. Nor was his wonted indolence in this case to blame : before leaving the theatre he ordered the prompter to call a rehearsal of *The Orphan* next morning. When the time arrived the two gentlemen who were to play the lovers, in order to pay their court to Quin, did not think proper to appear ; but Rich, justly offended, fined them more than usual : even Serina smiled with derision on the lovely young Monimia.

Such things often happen, and in other professions as well as in the players'. Mankind are more guided by the predilections for or against one another than they are willing to allow ; they render the path to distinction easier to those they happen to favour, and more difficult to those they chance to dislike, than justice can warrant. Hence it is, that we sometimes see those who have been honoured for their prematurity, afterwards sink, to be heard of no more, long before they naturally die ; and others in great splendour at their setting, who have all day travelled in clouds and obscurity.

Rich was mortified at seeing his protégée treated with such contempt ; but luckily the unjust opposition evinced towards her, only angered him into greater determination to adhere to his resolution, and he adopted the best means of making it effectual.

The dresses of the theatrical ladies were at this period indifferent : empresses and queens were confined to black velvet, except on extraordinary occasions, when they put on embroidered petticoats ; the young ladies generally appeared in the cast garments of people of quality ; and sometimes stage brides and virgins in faded dresses. Rich, however, on this occasion, to put Miss Bellamy in good-humour, and to compensate for the affront she had received, took her to his mercer's, and gave her leave to choose a dress for herself. The following morning, Castalio and Polidore attended the rehearsal, but Chamont (Quin) was inexorable.

The public, always inclined to the humane side, espoused the cause of our injured heroine as soon as the treatment she had met with was known, and became indignant at the conspiracy against her, for they attributed all that she had suffered to a machination of that kind.

The important night, big with the fate of Miss Bellamy, at length arrived ; the curtain drew up, and a splendid audience were assembled ; but she was so dazzled by the lights, and stunned by the plaudits, that she stood for some time like a statue. Quin exulted at her confusion, and Rich, astonished at the effect, entreated her to exert herself. She tried, but could not be heard in the side boxes. The applause continued during the first act. The manager, having pledged himself for her success, had planted friends in different parts of the house to insure it ; but finding her unable to recover her self-possession, he was distracted, as if his own fate had depended upon her. Again he had recourse to persuasion ; but nothing could rouse her, till the fourth act, when to the amazement of the audience, the surprise of the other performers, and the exultation of the manager, she felt herself suddenly awakened, and burst out with great splendour. Quin was so astonished at this unexpected display, that, with his wonted generosity of nature, he waited behind the scenes till the conclusion of the act, when, lifting her from the ground, he exclaimed aloud, "Thou art a divine creature, and the true spirit is in thee." Her triumph was complete ; the other performers, who, half an hour before, regarded her with pity, crowded around, and loaded her with gratulations ; and Quin, in contrition for his sarcasm, finding she was the reputed daughter of his old friend Lord Tyrawley, inclosed a bank-bill in a blank cover, and sent it by the penny post to her

mother ; besides favouring the young lady with a general invitation to his suppers, enjoining her at the same time never to come alone, because, as he jocularly said, he was not too old to be spared from censure.

The ordinary chances incident to the profession facilitated her rise ; and the acquisition of friends among people of rank was the consequence. Rich could not afford her a salary equal to the success she had met with, but he gave her a free benefit ; which, however, as she had but few friends, except those who, out of civility to Mr. Quin, espoused her cause, she had little reason to expect would prove lucrative. Sometime, however, before the day appointed she received a message from the Duchess of Queensberry to come to her Grace next day before twelve o'clock. But when she announced herself at Queensberry House, the groom of the chambers told her that the Duchess knew no such person. She assured him that by her Grace's own directions she had called ; he replied that there must have been some mistake, and with humiliation she returned home, expecting to receive taunts and sarcasms from a relation who had lately arrived from Ireland, and who had afterwards considerable influence on her destiny. Accordingly, she had no sooner returned from Queensberry House, and mentioned her reception, than this relation alleged that the invitation was a chimera of her own brain, generated by her vanity ; so virulent, indeed, were the deformed old lady's sarcasms, that Miss Bellamy, to shun her, went to the theatre. Upon entering the green-room, she was met by Prince Lobkowitz, requesting a box at her benefit for the corps diplomatique ; she thanked him for the honour, and informed his Highness they might be accommodated with a stage box. But he acquainted her that she had not a box to dispose of ; all but three private ones being retained for the Duchess of Queensberry. Our heroine thought the Prince was joking, especially as he had delivered to her the message of her Grace the night before, and which she had found a deception. He, however, persisted in what he said, and farther added, that the Duchess had sent for two hundred and fifty tickets. With this glad news she hastened home to tell her mother, and to retaliate upon her crooked relation, when she found a note from her Grace, requesting her to come next morning to Queensberry House. Having walked thither, she was immediately admitted to the Duchess, who said, " Well, young woman, what business had you in a chair yesterday ? it was a fine morning, and you might have walked. You look as you ought to do now (observing her linen gown) ; nothing is so vulgar as wearing silk in a morning : simplicity best becomes youth, and you do not stand in need of ornament ; therefore dress always plain, except when you are upon the stage."

While her Grace was thus talking, she was cleaning a picture, which Miss Bellamy observing, requested permission to do. " Don't you think I have domestics enough, if I did not choose to do it myself ?" said the Duchess. Miss Bellamy apologized for her presumption by telling her Grace that she had acquired some proficiency in the art while she had been at Mrs. Jones's. The Duchess upon this exclaimed, " Are you the girl I have heard Chestertfield speak of ?"

Being answered in the affirmative, she ordered a canvass bag to be taken from her cabinet, saying, "No person can give Queensberry less than gold ; there are two hundred and fifty guineas, and twenty for the Duke's tickets and mine. But I must give you something for Trawley's sake." She then took a bill from her pocket-book, which she put into Miss Bellamy's hands, and told her that a carriage was ordered to take her home, lest any accident should happen to her. The benefit, with this and other helps, surpassed her most sanguine expectations.

Among others who paid her particular attention was Lord Byron, who had little to boast of but his title and a fair face. He was offended at her rejection of his addresses, and resolved to be revenged ; for this purpose he engaged another nobleman to assist him, who was only distinguished for his profligacy. This associate had believed himself to be in love with a young lady, a friend of our heroine, and frequently, in consequence, called on Miss Bellamy. Her mother, who by this time had left the stage, and was become a confirmed devotee, enjoined her to break off her intimacy with that young lady, on account of her levity ; and because, though by birth a gentlewoman, she had degraded herself by becoming the companion of a lady of quality who had eloped from her lord. Lord Byron's noble friend, knowing the religious predilections of Mrs. Bellamy, came one Sunday evening, when he knew she would be engaged, and said to our heroine that her friend was in a coach at the end of the street, and desired to speak with her. Without staying to put on her hat or gloves, she hastened to the coach, when, to her surprise, she was suddenly hoisted into it by his Lordship, who, jumping in after, was driven off as fast as the horses could gallop.

The Earl conveyed her to his own house ; and in answer to her remonstrance for the manner in which she had been abducted, assured her of Lord Byron's benevolent intentions ; implored her compassion for his friend ; and, having left her with his housekeeper, went out to prepare a lodging for her. Soon after he returned, and, to her astonishment, with one of her brothers, a lieutenant in the navy, who believing at the time she had run off with the Right Honourable pander, inflicted a severe bodily chastisement on him, and immediately retired.

Such is the substance of her own account of the matter ; but it deserves to be noticed, that she went afterwards with the Earl to the lodgings he had taken for her, which happened to be in the house of her own dress-maker, and it does not appear that she made any attempt to return home. Seeing, however, an account of the transaction much exaggerated in the newspapers next day, she wrote to her mother the facts of the case, who returned her letter unopened. This sealed her doom ; she became unwell ; incurred debts to her lodging-keeper ; and was obliged, in consequence to go to her mother's relations, under the pretence of claiming a legacy which had been left to her some time before. In this journey, being led to dress neatly and plainly, she was regarded by them as a quaker. They, however, soon discovered her real character, and she was induced to leave them, even though their returning affection ought



to have softened her indignation at those reports to her disadvantage, reports to which they had lent, as she thought, too credulous an ear. From them she went to Ingateston, to spend some time with a young lady, an acquaintance, who had invited her; and not finding her friend at home, in her forlornness she boarded herself with a farmer.

While she resided with the farmer she often wrote to her mother, but could obtain no answer, and her spirits in consequence were again saddened. Exceedingly depressed, she one evening walked out alone, with Mrs. Rowe's "*Letters from the Dead to the Living*," which she read till they infected her mind, and she returned towards the house in superstitious dejection. In this condition she beheld, as she deemed it, an apparition of her parent coming towards her; at the sight she immediately fancied that her mother was dead, and was coming to upbraid her as the cause of her death. But if the spirit did intend to do so it was a most unjust ghost, and different from all others; for ghosts are always remarkable for their love of justice. However, it advanced, and our heroine became terrified, till the vision clasped her in its arms, and proved a real mother. It seems the deformed relation from Ireland had recently died, and that all Miss Bellamy's letters were discovered to have been in her possession, concealed from the disconsolate parent. It is surprising so many of such tricks should be found out by the same means; persons who have an interest in concealing the letters of others should be sure always to burn them.

When the two actresses had eased their labouring hearts in mutual explanation, the old lady related that Mrs. Jackson had married indiscreetly an Irishman, and that their home in London was in consequence broken up; finally, having no other alternative, it was arranged between them that our heroine should return to the stage. Accordingly, on coming back to London, Mrs. Bellamy went towards Covent Gardens to concert the proper measures with Mr. Rich, when she met Mr. Sheridan, the father of the orator, who inquired for George Anne, and expressed a wish to engage her, but to this she could not consent until she had previously seen Mr. Rich. That gentleman, when she had told him what had passed with the Dublin manager, advised her to accept his offer, for the young lady would have not only the benefit in him of a great master in dramatic elocution, but the privilege of appearing, even though so young, in every principal character; an advantage she could not expect in London, where the principal parts were considered as much the property of the performers as their weekly salary, and were only lent to novices for a trial of their skill. This advice was undoubtedly disinterested and judicious, but we are much inclined to doubt the fairness of the practice on which it was founded. There appears no reason, after a literary work has been published, to suppose that the writer has any authority longer over its knowledge; it is then public property, and free to be appropriated as all readers may think fit: this opinion is not, however, willingly acceded to by authors, who for the most part imagine that they possess an everlasting surveillance over their own works, and a right to control the use which others may make of them. It is much in the same way that actors en-

deavour to maintain their doctrine of a property in characters, to which they can in justice lay no higher claim than that they had previously taken the pains to get them by heart. By the advice of Rich, however, Miss Bellamy, instead of attempting to differ from what was then the established custom of the stage, was induced to accede to the proposal of Mr. Sheridan, and went with her mother to Dublin, where, after a pleasant journey, not remarkable for any incident which deserves to be narrated here, save in a Mr. Crump professing love for her, with whom in the course of the journey they happened to fall in, they arrived in safety.

In Dublin, our heroine waited in duty on Mrs. O'Hara, the sister of Lord Tyrawley, who had not seen her since she was an infant, and who was much pleased with her visit, without, however, being satisfied with the profession to which she had been driven. But she agreed to introduce her to her acquaintances as the acknowledged daughter of her brother. Mrs. O'Hara kindly inquired into the state of her finances, which gave her an opportunity of describing the eccentric liberality of the Duchess of Queensberry, with which she was naturally much entertained. She informed her also of the adventures with Lord Byron and his friend, which had been the cause of her distress. In this frankness there was much discretion, for the good opinion of no one is to be gained by half candour—a friend must be trusted with the secrets of the heart, as a physician, or a lawyer, with the defects as well as the rights of a case.

The theatre was opened with éclat, and the court was brilliant, for the Earl of Chesterfield was at that time Viceroy of Ireland. Miss Bellamy became a public favourite, and was obliged to appear almost every night; but her ambition to excel was as great as her desire of distinction, and she studied with assiduity, even anxiously, in order to be found worthy of the public approbation. She was, however, destined always to endure some repulsive mortification when she had a just claim for fame or indulgence. In her agreement with Mr. Sheridan, she had stipulated, in the proud consciousness of her own powers, that she could perform Constance in *King John*,—a part unsuitable to her years. Garrick, being in Dublin at the same time, however, objected to this, and ultimately Miss Bellamy was rejected for the part. This was a breach of her engagement; she told the circumstances to one of her father's fashionable relations, by whom she was much patronized, and the spirit of aristocracy was roused. The lady, who cherished a great partiality for Garrick, indignant at the treatment which her young friend suffered from his prejudice, requested her acquaintance not to go to the theatre that night. As her friends and visitors were numerous, and she was popular among the young gentry for the balls she gave, her request took great effect, and when the play was performed the house was very thin.

In London alone the profession is independent of individual influence: such an interference would there but only have brought a fuller or more noisy house. In this, however, Miss Bellamy's relation acted properly, for her young friend was evidently the victim of professional jealousy; and it was spirited to convince the players, by the exercise of her power, that after all their fretting and strutting

on the stage, they were only the puppets of rank and the toys of recreation.

The effect was humiliating to Garrick, and still more when Miss Bellamy afterwards was brought out in Constance, and the house could not receive the numerous audience who sought admission. The event gave her fresh energy, and not being altogether free from the vixen, she resolved to be revenged; accordingly, when one of Garrick's benefits came round, for he was to have two in the course of the season, he chose for the first *Jane Shore*, and applied to Miss Bellamy to play the part, but she would not, assigning for her reason the same that he had employed when he opposed her Constance, namely, she was too young. On this occasion he wrote her a note, which he intended to be most jocular, but which exposed him to the laughter of all Dublin—the Niagara of that sort of cataract. In this note he told her, that “if she would oblige him, he would write her a goody, goody epilogue; which, with the help of her eyes, should do more mischief than ever the flesh or the Devil had done since the world began.” This epistle he directed “To my soul's idol, the beautified Ophelia,” and sent his servant with it; but he having some amusement for himself to pursue, gave it to a porter in the street, and the porter upon reading the superscription, and not knowing any lady in the whole city who bore the title either of “my soul's idol,” or “the beautified Ophelia,” concluded it was to answer some jocular purpose. He, therefore, carried it to his master, and by his means it got the next day into the newspapers, and set all Dublin in a roar.

When a reconciliation with Garrick had been effected, Miss Bellamy's mother took a furnished house at the sheds of Clontarf for some time, where they resided till the winter, but Miss was a frequent visitor to the city. On one occasion she afforded the public some amusement which they had not bargained for. At a concert she happened to be seated next to Lord Chief Baron Bower, when a stranger, entering into conversation with his Lordship, remarked, that his daughter (meaning Miss Bellamy) was vastly like him. *The Merchant of Venice* was then reviving at the theatre, and she instantly made particular observations on his Lordship, to adopt in her part of Portia. In this she succeeded so happily, that when she made her appearance as the learned doctor from Padua, the audience simultaneously cried out, “Here comes the young Lord Chief Baron;” a title she retained during her residence in Ireland.

Some of the little professional anecdotes of our heroine are piquant, and one of the best is an adventure, of which Mrs. Furnival was the cause. Early in the season *All for Love, or the World well Lost*, was prepared for representation; Miss Bellamy was to perform Cleopatra, and Mrs. Furnival, Octavia. It happened that the Queen got a new splendid dress for the occasion, made out of a suite of silver tissue which had belonged to the Princess of Wales, and that she had many borrowed jewels to make it the more gorgeous. The paraphernalia were left in her dressing-room at the theatre by her servant, who neglected to close the door. Mrs. Furnival, in passing, beheld the glittering attire, and carrying it away put it on, so that

Miss Bellamy was obliged to appear in a plain garb of white satin. In the mean time her servant, missing the dress, ran about like a mad creature, till she was informed that Mrs. Furnival had got it on, with whom she had an immediate battle. This, however, was not all : when Cleopatra appeared in her plain dress, the audience were astonished ; and when Mrs. Furnival came on, one of the ladies who had lent her jewels exclaimed aloud, on seeing her, “ The woman has got my diamonds ! ” The gentlemen in the pit, on hearing this, concluded that she had been robbed, and the consternation which ensued is not to be described ; at length Mrs. Furnival was obliged to retire for the evening.

About this period Garrick had purchased a half-share in the patent of Drury Lane, and the sound of Miss Bellamy’s success in the Irish metropolis having reached him, he wished to engage her for the next London season, and made her an offer of ten pounds a week, which, however, she declined. Soon after, terror, arising from one of those accidents to which ladies on the stage are sometimes liable from the impertinence of young men, brought on a slight illness which interrupted her performance, but on her recovery she re-appeared.

In this juncture of her story Miss Bellamy gives some interesting description of the humour of the Irish. It belongs, indeed, almost exclusively to the memoirs of the players, to furnish accounts of popular public manners ; but though the sketches of our heroine are written with vivacity, some of them are too circumstantial to be transposed into these pages ; still, to the student of man and nations, the characteristics they afford are curious, and it is impossible to look on her pictures without becoming sensible that the Irish character has as many peculiarities which distinguish it from that of the English, as features do individuals from one another. The people undoubtedly, from some constitutional exuberance, have more enjoyment in confusion and riot than their friends on this side the channel, and in consequence perhaps, they are less just ; but still a strong vein of generosity runs through all their pranks.

At the close of the season our heroine resolved to return to London, and was the more induced to hasten her departure from Dublin, as Lord Tyrawley was coming from Russia to see his sister Mrs. O’Hara, then blind and in decaying health. It was impossible to leave a country, however, where she had received so much kindness from her relations and applause from the public, without regret.

On reaching London, her mother informed Garrick of their arrival, and they were received by him with the kind cheerfulness of his character, while he expressed his sorrow that the state of his company prevented him from engaging our heroine. Quin was at this time in Bath, but Rich renewed his friendship, and received them at his house in the country with undiminished regard. At length she was announced for the character of Belvidera, but instead of a full house, as she expected, it was far otherwise : her reception, however, was flattering, and when another play was given out for the following evening, the audience cried out for a repetition of *Venice Preserved*, which continued attractive to the end of the season.

One evening, when she was performing Athenais in *Theodosius*, she had scarcely come upon the stage when the first object she saw was Lord Byron, who had placed himself in the stage-box. The sight of his Lordship deprived her of all power, and she stood for some time motionless. Rich and his family saw her tremour from their box, and he came round to her assistance. Lord Byron had by this time quitted his place, and was leaning against one of the side-scenes when the manager entered. On seeing him his Lordship said, "Well, Rich, I am come to take away your Athenais;" but the manager reproved him for so avowing his unjustifiable design, and remonstrated with him for alarming her, adding with firmness, "I desire, my Lord, that you will quit the scenes, for I cannot stand tamely by and see my performers insulted." His Lordship, not choosing to resent the lecture, retired to his seat in the stage-box, but he was no sooner there than the audience, to whom the story of Miss Bellamy was not unknown, obliged him to seek another part of the house. Quin was not at the theatre that evening, but he heard of her adventure, and Thomson the poet also being informed of it, came to the house. As Thomson passed near the back of the stage, he heard two persons in conversation, one of whom said to the other, "I will speak to her to-night, or I will shoot——" Thomson could catch no more, but he concluded it could be no other than Lord Byron thus uttering his designs to a friend. The poet of "The Seasons" immediately told Quin, who by this time had come, what he had heard, and he said to the lady, "Madam, we must have no chairing of it to-night, you must go home under my arm."

When she was undressed he ordered her chair to be brought from the stage-door, with all the curtains drawn, into the passage, that it might be supposed she was actually in it, whilst they walked together through the house, and reached her mother's in safety.

When the chairmen soon after arrived, they mentioned that they had been stopped on the way by a man muffled up in a great coat, who lifted up the top of the chair and threw something into it. This excited much curiosity; Quin ordered the letter to be taken out, and it proved to be from a young gentleman different from the individual suspected. They then sat down to supper, but just as they were seated, a waiter from the Bedford Head-tavern brought a letter. The scrawl came from Lord Byron, who, though lately married to one of the best and loveliest of her sex, made Miss Bellamy an offer of a settlement. Quin, as soon as he had read it, called for pen and ink, and sent the following answer:—"Lieutenant O'Hara's compliments to Lord Byron, and if he ever dares to insult his sister again, it shall not be either his title or his cowardice that shall preserve him from chastisement." Next morning the valiant nobleman set off for Newstead Abbey, and troubled her no more; but, nevertheless, her headlong destiny was not to be arrested.

Next evening, as soon as her part on the stage was over, Quin, with pleasure sparkling in his eyes, desired her to kneel to the first person she met in the scene-room. It was her father Lord Tyrawley: their meeting was affecting, and his Lordship requested her to hasten home, as Quin and he intended to sup with her; and though her

mother was never present with his Lordship, he appeared in every other respect kindly disposed to the welfare of his daughter. About this period she became deeply enamoured of Mr. Metham, and soon after, as she regarded him as her husband-to-be, she freely accepted his presents ; but in the mean time her evil genius was at work, for as soon as her benefit was over, Lord Tyrawley, much to her surprise, came to her, and insisted that she should accept the hand of Mr. Crump, the gentleman already mentioned. This she refused ; high words arose between them ; and the result was that she eloped with Mr. Metham. This decided her fate. She accompanied him to York, where for some time they lived together as man and wife. While there, a nobleman who had a horse to run for the race-plate, was at their house for some days, during which, at dinner, he sat at her right hand, and much to her annoyance kept his eye constantly and steadily fixed on her. At first she took no particular notice of this, being accustomed to receive many instances of homage to her charms in impudent staring ; but so marked a manner at last forced her to speak of it to Mr. Metham who laughingly informed her of the fact, that she was frightened by an innocent glass-eye.

Towards the end of the year she was delivered of a child, the birth of which almost cost her her life, but it was the means of reconciling her to her mother, and, when scarcely recovered, she was urged to return to London, and to accept an advantageous engagement. It was not, however, till the beginning of February that they could leave York ; but on her arrival she was received with more public favour than she had ventured to expect.

It would seem that the intercourse between people of rank and the players was in a remarkable state. The great received theatrical persons only as means of amusement, and were very little scrupulous about their personal reputation, even while they treated them apparently in the most condescending manner. At the approach of our heroine's benefit she received a card desiring her to attend next day on the Prince and Princess of Wales. So flattering a distinction was of course duly appreciated. While she was with their Royal Highnesses an instance of innate good-breeding occurred which well deserves to be ever recorded. The Duchess of Chandos was present. This beautiful lady had been elevated from the lowest obscurity to her station, and no great opinion was entertained of her mind or endowments, but an incident occurred which served to show the natural superiority of her feeling: the sun happened to shine full on the Princess, and was exceedingly troublesome, upon which the Duchess, with inimitable gracefulness, crossed the drawing-room, and having let down the curtain, returned to her place. The thoughtfulness and the elegance of the manner in which this was done were much admired, and added to the renown which her beauty had spread abroad.

The royal party chose a play for our heroine's benefit, but the death of the Prince took place before it could be performed, and the theatres were in consequence closed.

Whatever may have been the personal fascinations of Mr. Metham, by which our heroine was so enchanted, he was entirely in the clut-

ches of one dreadful vice—gaming. Miss Bellamy had also by this time contracted a taste for expense ; she took a house at Richmond, where Lord Tyrawley, her father, at the time resided, and a reconciliation was soon effected between them. But it was at this juncture that the uncertain Fortune which attends on such pursuits as Mr. Metham's proved her wonted fickleness ; his affairs became embarrassed, and those of his mistress's were in no better plight. It is an old saying, that as Poverty comes in at the door, Love flies out at the window, and it was so in this instance. Miss Bellamy, though still under age, young, and beautiful, was already waning in her love for Metham ; and possibly the chagrin arising from both their circumstances had some effect in turning her thoughts to other speculations ; at least some fancy had got into her head that she might be able to captivate the French King, and all manner of other gay and foolish fancies began to take possession of her brain. With these she was induced to visit Tunbridge Wells, where she soon lost all that remained of her money, and was rejected by some of her father's relations who were at the time there, but in a way that did them, it must be allowed, great honour.

The two circumstances, want of money and the rejection by her relations, obliged her to return suddenly to London, where she formed, in rather a romantic manner, an acquaintance with Mr. Fox, the first Lord Holland, and his friend Mr. Calcraft. Not having money to pay for the horses which had brought her from Tunbridge Wells, she had sent to a friend of Mr. Metham's for a supply, and while the servant was gone Mr. Fox and Mr. Calcraft happened to pass, and were induced to visit her. In this affair a note for fifty pounds was left for her on the mantel-shelf, and after an agreeable conversation they went away : with this note she went, with other visitors who came in afterwards, to cards, and won as much more.

It was now evident that her youthful habits were broken, and her principles becoming too flexible. It could not be said that she was absolutely profligate, but she had, from the period of her elopement, widely receded from feminine propriety, though still agreeable to her light and gay friends.

She joined Garrick and the performers at Drury Lane theatre ; at the same time she also set up a Pharo bank, and commenced a career that promised no honour and only hopes of emolument—if that epithet can be applied to an establishment which at the outset was eminently prosperous, insomuch that her profits soon enabled her to redeem her jewels, which were pledged for the capital of the bank : also to pay her debts, and to leave her a considerable residue.

When the theatrical season came round, Miss Bellamy appeared as Juliet with Garrick. During the run of the play she formed an acquaintance with an old gentleman and a lady (Mr. Gunsel, of Donnan Park, near Colchester), which, in its opening, began with great felicity ; at the same time Mr. Metham, who had long been detained by his pecuniary perplexities in the country, came to town, but not in circumstances of sufficient affluence to justify him in again setting up an establishment.

It was on this occasion that, incited by her mother, she requested

him to perform his promise of marrying her ; but he rose and abruptly left the room. Soon after she received a note from him, engaging himself and his brother-in-law, Mr. Dives, to dine with her, and requesting that there should be no other company. When they arrived there was a third gentleman with them, who proved to be an attorney. Mr. Metham mentioned a deed of settlement which he intended to make, by which, if he died without issue, the estates he expected by his father should go to Mr. Dives, who had married his sister, and that three hundred pounds on them should be secured to her, and two thousand pounds to their son. Thus ended that liaison, much in the usual way of such connexions.

About this time an agreeable anecdote is related of a quarrel which arose between her and the famous Night Thoughts Young. Miss Bellamy objected to an absurd line in *The Brothers*, from Princess Irexine—

“ I will speak in thunder to you.”

The Doctor said he thought it the most forcible line in the piece ; to which she risibly replied that she thought it would be much more so if he added lightning. This nettled him, and he declared the play was the best he ever wrote. She reminded him of his *Revenge*, which set the other performers a smiling, and threw him into a passion. However, by a happy application of flattery, she appeased the Doctor, who, to the astonishment of all present, like another Jephtha, sacrificed the line, and ended all contest by inviting himself home to dine with her—a circumstance now more remarkable than in those days, for few servants of the Church, especially one possessing such a pious reputation as the author of Night Thoughts would have made such an appointment with a gay actress under protection.

The 30th of January, the Martyrdom of King Charles, there being no performance at the theatre, and the day being also the anniversary of Mr. Metham's birth, his mistress gave a dinner to some of his friends, and among others he brought Mr. Calcraft with him. At this dinner, the dessert being too sumptuous, Mr. Metham quarrelled with her. The festivity of the company was in consequence destroyed, and our heroine solemnly vowed, that were he then to offer his hand she would reject it.

Mr. Metham came next day and endeavoured to atone for his rudeness, but she remained inexorable ; after some days, finding she still objected to receive him as a lover, he solicited to be admitted as a friend, and to this she reluctantly consented. In this crisis she received, under a blank cover, a present of a thousand pounds, which, however, she laid aside, persuaded that the donor would declare himself. This afterwards proved to have been sent from Mr. Calcraft, who soon after pledged himself to the extent of fifty thousand pounds, to marry her after six or seven years, when he expected to be free to do so. In this offer there was, however, great duplicity, for he had another wife then living, unknown to his friends and the world ; but though she was induced at first to refuse a representation relative to Metham's conduct, she was persuaded to



change her mind, and in all but the name became the wife of Calcraft. It belongs not, however, to the character of this work to dwell on the hasty and headlong resolutions of Miss Bellamy. It is enough to mention, that without much affection, she lived with him, and being possessed both of great cleverness and much sagacity, it was generally considered that she was the Mary Anne Clarke of the day, but she materially assisted in the augmentation of Calcraft's fortune.

It was commonly supposed that she was married to Calcraft; yet, though regarded as the wife of a man in universal esteem, in the enjoyment of affluence, fame, and every luxury, she was now unhappy. Her heart lay cold in the midst of all the blandishments around her, and, with a gay and smiling countenance, her bosom was full of sorrow. She had strayed from the path of rectitude, she was conscious she had done so, and sought for peace of mind in the midst of a brilliant dissipation without finding it. Her health, from these secret causes, began to give way, and she was advised to visit the Bristol wells for a time. Scarcely, however, had she reached the place, when she was informed that Mr. Calcraft was seized with the gout in his head, and that her daughter was taken with the small-pox, and had infected her mother; in consequence she was compelled, alike by anxiety and affection, to hasten to the invalids. Her alarm, however, proved fortunately greater than the event; all recovered, and the tenour of her life flowed in its wonted channel, until the state of her health again obliged her to go abroad.

On her return to London, she found Mr. Calcraft had enlarged their establishment, and taken a splendid house in Parliament-street; but he refused to pay the extra expenses which had been incurred by housekeeping in their preceding residence. This, as represented in the Apology, was mean on his part; but we must always recollect that the lady was profuse. On the morning in which she came to an explanation with Mr. Calcraft respecting their household bills, just as he had left the apartment from the altercation, a female was shown in—tall, thin, pale, and dejected, but with the remains of a mien which seemed to declare she had not been born to indigence. After some preliminary conversation, she threw open a decent cloak that covered her variety of wretchedness, and exhibited such a spectacle of ruin and beggary, that was itself a painful affliction to witness. She then told her story—that she was the widow of a young baronet, the first lieutenant of a man-of-war, which had been blown up in battle. That her marriage had been one more of love than prudence, which had induced her father-in-law to leave only his title and a very small estate to his son; and that she had five children—four in misery. Her eldest son had some expectations from his uncle; but the others were most wretched, and her eldest daughter had, through the carelessness of the servant, fallen through a window, by which she had broken one of her legs, that was obliged to be amputated. The shock of the catastrophe that had befallen her husband threw her into premature labour, and the child she had borne, and who was then four years old, there was cause to fear would prove an idiot. These accumulated distresses had impaired

her own health, and occasioned the temporary loss of the use of her limbs, and in this state of grief, misfortune, and want, she had been induced to apply for assistance.

Miss Bellamy presented her with more money than she could spare, which she had just received from Mr. Calcraft: and at the same juncture, Mr. Fox, the father of the celebrated orator, entered the room. The poor lady's tale was briefly told, and he was exceedingly moved. He presented her with a note for fifty pounds, and soon after her four children, through his influence, were placed on the compassionate list with a pension of ten pounds a-year, and she herself was allowed fifty pounds annually from the Treasury, in consideration of her husband having lost his life in the service of his country. This anecdote itself deserves the more consideration, as an instance where the private bounty of the man preceded the public justice of the minister, and reflects honour on the feelings of Miss Bellamy.

At all times the agent of impulses, Miss Bellamy about this period rendered herself also distinguished by her patronage, after the condemnation of the Rev. Dr. Wilkinson, the first victim of the then New Marriage Act.

The players are not all judiciously educated, nor do they always take the trouble to remedy early neglect or carelessness, though no class of public men requires more accuracy of information in respect to national and historical costume. While Miss Bellamy continued to live with Mr. Calcraft, she still pursued her career on the stage. *The Prophetess* being appointed for representation, Mr. Ross consulted her how a Roman emperor should be dressed, and among other things she advised him to have a wig as near as possible made to resemble a natural head of hair. Mr. Rich thought it should be what was called a full-bottomed one; and Miss Bellamy, smiling at this idea, put on a grave dramatic face, and said, "Then let it be as large a one as you can, and to render yourself the more conspicuous, you must wear a hoop under your lamb-skins."

Both player and manager believing her serious, the advice was taken, and never was a reception by any audience more joyous than that of poor Mr. Ross, on the night of representation, in his grotesque apparel, of imperial Cæsar. The joke, however, had a good effect, as it broke the absurd custom of dressing the heroes of Greece and Rome in full-bottomed perukes.

In the *Apology* for her Life are several shrewd remarks, which partake of the vivacity of her character: I am, therefore, notwithstanding the cloud that hangs upon the thorough authenticity of the work, much inclined to believe the narrative genuine, and that it was dictated by herself. Mr. Calcraft appears to have been an able man of business, and much of the vituperation with which she accuses him of sordid and ungallant qualities, should be perhaps ascribed to feminine petulance. His greatest errors consisted in linking himself with so gay and so thoughtless a mistress; vanity, undoubtedly, was one of the main motives that induced him.

On one of her benefits, having a dramatic reason to postpone the evening she effected an exchange with Mrs. Hamilton, a vulgar

woman, who rejoiced in the honour of having her benent for the first of the season. The night happened to be wet ; the boxes were thin, and the two-shilling gallery overflowing, the company were admitted to them. Miss Bellamy pretended, or felt an offensive effluvia from them, and Ross told Mrs. Hamilton in playful malice, that the reason why she held her handkerchief to her face during the performance was, because they *stunk*. On the subsequent evening, when Mrs. Hamilton should have performed for our heroine, she feigned illness. This disappointed the audience, and when she next appeared they hissed her. At length upon the tumult a little ceasing, she stepped forward and said "Gentlemen and ladies ! I suppose as how you hiss me, because I did not play at Miss Bellamy's benefit. I would have performed, but she said my audience stunk, and were all tripe people." The house was in a roar of laughter, and the pit, with that ready taste by which they are ever distinguished, cried out, "Well said, Tripe !" and joined in the universal encore.

But I should observe, that about this period the spirit of Miss Bellamy was evidently chagrined. There is a malicious satisfaction plainly in some of her anecdotes of others, which cannot be applauded ; for undoubtedly she is depicted as a "good hater," and certainly some of her stories deeply partake of this unpleasant colouring. Considering, therefore, the question which hangs over the work ascribed to Bicknell, I am sufficiently justified in omitting some of her tales, which, at the utmost, are only calculated to give pain to the descendants of those on whom she is made to inflict her asperity. At the same time, there are others so much out of the common current of events, that they cannot with so much premeditated matention be passed over : for example, at the rehearsal of Dodsley's *Uleon*, the incidents were both characteristic in themselves and amusing. This tragedy Garrick had declined, but in the other house, by the simple and natural performance of our heroine, the play proved effectual, notwithstanding the low and slow manner in which at the rehearsal she acted the madness—a style which had been condemned by the author, and by the lords and gentlemen who were then present.

Among others at the rehearsal she perceived Mr. Metham, whom she had not met since they had separated, and who affected an indifference and a dignity contrary to truth. The effect of his manner disconcerted her, and but recovering from an indisposition from which she had suffered considerably, she played with feebleness and languor. Dr. Johnson, who was also present, under an impression that she had misconceived her part, interfered, and when she came to repeat "Thou shalt not murder," caught her roughly by the arm saying at the same time, "It is a commandment, and must be spoken, 'Thou shalt not murder !'" The Doctor was not then personally known to her, and his rude handling was not calculated to win her regard. This, with her indisposition, and Metham's appearance, made her so seemingly unfit for the part, that the author told her that he as well as his friends did not think she was foreible enough ; when, to his consternation, she replied, "I have a reputation to lose as an actress ; but, as for your piece, Mr. Garrick

has anticipated the damnation of it, publicly, the last night, at the Bedford Coffee-house, where he declared that it could not pass muster, as it was the very worst ever exhibited." This had the effect of driving him away with humiliated hopes. The style, however, which she intended to adopt was that of great simplicity, both in manners and dress; and, in consequence, she resolved to part with her hoop: an innovation of great moment, for at that period professed nuns appeared in that decoration as well as with powder in their hair. Her conception of the part elicited the most brilliant applause, and she had the satisfaction, in the death-scene, to hear the gong-like voice of Dr. Johnson sounding in the pit, as if he had been himself a young fellow, "I will write a copy of verses upon her myself."

It was not in her profession only that Miss Bellamy was distinguished. Complaints having come from the army, then in Germany, that the soldiers' shirts were so ill stitched that they became unsewed in the first washing, and that their shoes and stockings were badly manufactured; as Mr. Calcraft was in fault for this, she made inquiry, and found that an additional penny for making the shirt, and three halfpence per pair in the shoes and stockings, would remedy the evil: this addition she directed to be given at her own expense, for all the contract that Mr. Calcraft had taken, and was brought by it into debt to the amount of nine hundred pounds. Save, however, a hundred pounds from Mr. Fox, and another from the Marquis of Granby, at her benefit, she received no other reward for her public service—except the honour of the sentinels in the Park resting their arms as she passed: an incident that reflects something like the beauty of gratitude on the army, to whom two actresses have done essential and disinterested service—our heroine, in this temporary instance, and Nell Gwyn in suggesting Chelsea Hospital.

After the birth of their son, Henry Fox Calcraft, to whom Mr. Fox stood sponsor, Miss Bellamy was suddenly overtaken with a severe illness, for which she was sent to Bristol, burning with indignation against Mr. Calcraft for his negligence in paying their mutual debts, but, after getting rid of her disease, she was, notwithstanding his sordid treatment, induced to return to his house in Parliament-street. Her adventures there were again of the same tissue as the rest of her life—full of incidents tinged with sorrow; but after several such scenes as were to be expected from the state of their tempers, she went to Bristol again, intending to return no more.

She next accepted of an engagement which induced her to revisit Ireland, where, having performed with her usual applause, and acted with equal thoughtlessness of conduct, she returned to London, but did not rejoin Mr. Calcraft, having another connexion.

The downward career of her adventures had now commenced. There may have been some reason for the complaints which she so bitterly made of Mr. Calcraft, but her own conduct was eminently extravagant; and more owing in fact, to that prodigality are her faults to be ascribed, than either viciousness of heart or dissoluteness of principle. Being deeply in debt, she was induced, the better to

make an arrangement with her creditors, to go clandestinely abroad, but she was stopped at a village in the neighbourhood of Warwick by her paramour Mr. Diggs, and conveyed by him to Cambridge. Various circumstances connected with her flight, arising from pecuniary necessity, obliged her to visit Edinburgh, but in a lower and more humiliated condition than she had ever been in all her life before. In the Scottish metropolis, however, when the state of her affairs became public, she was indulgently treated, and the laws there being more lenient to debtors than those of England, her perplexities were less afflicting.

A theatre being at this period created in Glasgow, she was invited to open it. Her circumstances were at the time greatly hampered, and, to add to her distress, when she arrived in the royal city, she was informed that the theatre, with all her wardrobe, which had been sent before her from Edinburgh, had, on the preceding evening, been destroyed by an intentional fire. Glasgow, which in liberality and good faith is among the most distinguished cities of the empire, has ever been remarkable for possessing within itself a fanatic spirit less worldly than may be met with elsewhere. The building of a theatre had inflamed this spirit to a great degree, insomuch that one of the preachers was moved by it to have dreams and visions ; in one of which, as he recited it to his hearers, he was present at a convivial party in the infernal regions, where Lucifer, stirring the punch-bowl, gave the health of the gentleman who had sold the ground for the playhouse. The hearers, so unlike any thing that ever takes place in Glasgow, the city that flourishes by the preaching of the word, hastened to the den of abominations, and set it on fire, but after the stage and wardrobe had been consumed, the general edifice was rescued from destruction.

On this occasion our heroine behaved with great equanimity. After inspecting the ruins, she desired the manager to go to the Cross, and inform every person he saw that, unless she made her appearance next evening, according to her agreement, but which, by the burning of her wardrobe, she could not do, she would not act at all. The heart of the plainstones was moved, and one of the principal merchants came immediately to the inn and offered her whatever money she stood in need of, and told her she should have all the ladies' clothes about the city, if it were possible to get the stage repaired. That moral play *The Citizen*, with *The Mock Doctor* for the farce, as a tragedy could not be got up in time, was accordingly the first performance of the regular drama in Glasgow ; and it is but a consistent historical fact, that the assurance given to Miss Bellamy was almost literally fulfilled : from being mistress of only one gown, she was soon in possession of forty, and some of them almost new and very rich, for the Glasgow people do not keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope ; on the contrary, her performance was a great night in the royal city. The Provost's wife, or at least one of the principal ladies, declared from the boxes that the audience would not stir till the players and servants of the house were safely out : and, accordingly, the town guard escorted them home, that they might not be molested on the road.

From Glasgow our heroine returned in due season to Edinburgh, and she speaks of the treatment she received in these two cities as commendable to the Scottish character. She then returned to London, and, in the journey, visited Mr. Metham, as a common friend, now, by the death of his father, "Sir George," where she spent some days agreeably and innocently; and where he, being related to the Earl of Eglinton, entreated his Lordship's influence to procure an engagement for her with the managers, but it proved abortive.

On her arrival in town at her mother's, she separated herself from Mr. Diggs, and formed an engagement with the managers of Covent Garden. With it the signs of her fate recommenced; she became involved in fresh embarrassments, and her character as gradually sank in the estimation of the virtuous portion of the public. Her respectable friends and patrons could not be said to have deserted her; it was, however, more for their own enjoyment in her acting, than friendship for her, that they appeared at the theatre, for they abridged their personal intercourse. By her debts she was exposed to fresh indignities, so that her health and, above all, her spirits, one of her chiefest spells, began to decline, and, to add to her inward causes of dejection, she was no longer an object of solicitude, but had incurred a tendency to be rejected by the managers. In this assemblage of unfortunate circumstances she lost her mother, and her natural sorrow on the event was darkened by the perfidy and injustice of a relation who administered to her will as heir-at-law. At this period Mr. Calcraft also died, without otherwise noticing her in his will than as the mother of his children; nor did he mention his wife by name, whom he had married in secrecy, an omission which enabled her, by afterwards proving the marriage, to set the will aside, and to obtain, in consequence, a third part of his fortune.

Miss Bellamy, about this time, formed some connection with Woodward. What it may have been is not very clearly made out, but their friendship was mutual and when he died his will evinced the sincerity of his regard; her attempts, however, to recover the legacy were fruitless, and the attorney, who had the management of the business, treated her with insolence. It could not be said that it was the first time that she had met with it, but it was the first time when it ought to have been repressed, not because she was then suffering pecuniary distress, but because she was enduring the disappointment of a well-founded hope.

Her circumstances were becoming desperate; her professional enchantments had ceased, her beauty faded, and the charm of her natural buoyancy of spirits was dissolved; she was now forty-five years of age, friendless, and with a tainted reputation. Poverty compelled her to discharge her man-servant, though he had lived with her a long time; she likewise gave up her first-floor apartments, and went to a higher and meaner room in the same house; she was far beyond her depth in debt, and she had parted to the pawnbrokers with every article that she could raise a shilling upon. She saw no hope, and resolved to put a period to her existence.

She left the house unperceived, between nine and ten o'clock, wild, gloomy, and silent, wandering about the roads and fields till

the clock was striking eleven ; she then made towards Westminster-bridge, as there was a probability that she would not at that hour be interrupted by passengers. Having reached the bridge, she descended the stairs and sat down on the lowest step, waiting till the tide would cover her. Her despair was of that sullen kind which could endure,—though resolved on death, she thought not of taking the fatal plunge,—and she prayed as she sat almost confident that “the Everlasting had not fixed his canon against self-slaughter.” The moon shone dimly through the clouds, and gave just light enough to distinguish a passenger on the bridge, but she herself was in mourning, and not likely to be discerned. She took off her bonnet and apron and laid them on the stairs, and leaning her head upon her hands was lost in sorrow, ruminating on the pleasures and disappointments of her chequered life. In this sad posture, chiding the tardy waters, she was roused from her reverie by the voice of a woman at some little distance, in a soft, plaintive tone addressing a child in these sorrowful words,—“How, my dear, can you cry to me for bread, when you know I have not even a morsel to carry to your dying father !—My God, my God, what wretchedness can compare to mine !—but thy Almighty will be done !” The words smote the heart of our unhappy heroine ; she burst into tears and echoed, “Thy Almighty will be done !” and putting her hand into her pocket for a handkerchief to wipe her eyes, she felt that she had a few half-pence remaining : prompted by the impulse of the moment she ran up the steps and gave them to the woman. It is such things as this that make the events of nature often beggar the wonders of fiction, and justify the pious lines of Phillips the poet :—

“ Though plung’d in ills, and exercised in care,  
 Yet never let the noble mind despair :  
 When press’d with dangers, and beset with foes,  
 The gods their timely succour interpose :  
 And when our virtue sinks, o’erwhelm’d with grief,  
 By unforeseen expedients bring relief.”

This occurrence changed the tenor of her thoughts, and she returned home, encouraged yet to live : but the hope by which she was actuated was feeble, her maid crying for her absence, and yet happy at the same time to tell her that she had obtained two shillings to appease their immediate necessity. Next day a lady called upon her, and administered what kindness she could, and, during the course of a few days after, she heard repeated knockings at the door, of different persons having called to assist her. This was owing to a paragraph which somebody had inserted in the papers, to the purport that the female Timon was in want of the necessaries of life, and those who had formerly partaken of her prosperity ought to blush at suffering her to be in such a condition. This was one of the methods to which the lady had recourse in order to make her case known ; but such is the common insensibility of the world, that but one obeyed the call.

The theatre, however, soon enabled her to reduce the most pressing of her claims, and her misfortunes were mitigated. But the man to whom she threw her virgin beauty away, Sir George Metham,

refused to assist her, and, save the Duke of Montague and Earl Spencer, she was abandoned by all her summer friends. Still the players, by concurring in a free benefit for her, on the 24th of May 1785, put it in the power of the town to redeem humanity from the disgrace of leaving an old favourite to starve. Her doom, however, was sealed—she not only had encountered the difficulties brought on by her own folly, but was involved in those of others, and had fallen among unprincipled and vicious characters; and, in the midst of the troubles arising from all these causes, she received accounts of the death of her eldest son, and, on the back of the event, a refusal from his father, Sir George, to furnish her with money to buy mourning.

She was now verging to the confines of the last stage of human misery, that of being despised. She advertised, under a fictitious name, for the place of a servant, under the denomination of house-keeper to an elderly gentleman, but no one ever inquired after the advertiser. She had not, however, absolutely again fallen to despair, nor into common crime; but she was low indeed. In this base and degraded state she was informed by Arthur Murphy, that her annuity on the estate of Mr. Calcraft was established against his executors. It was, however, but a vision, the empty establishment of an abstract proposition—nothing came to her.

In 1786 she was again imprisoned for debt, and on this occasion she addressed the public, stating her situation, and that it was owing to her eagerness to pay her just debts, in return for which she had met with only reproaches and insults. In 1788, she died. It is impossible to reflect on the close of her life without sorrow: few sketches of biography more emphatically tell their moral.

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## ARTHUR MURPHY.

ARTHUR MURPHY is an example of the utmost eminence to which respectable mediocrity may attain. No man can hope, without the gifts of originality and genius, to reach higher distinction; and with the utmost ambition that can be united with these endowments, none has better deserved the modicum of esteem which frugal posterity awards to talent. Had his ability been equal to his endeavours, he would have been great. On the stage, Garrick had withered before him, as a dramatist, Shakspeare and Sheridan had veiled their diminished heads—as a lawyer, Coke and Littleton had been but as precedents to a statute, and as a translator, the classics had derived lustre from his touch—for in all these departments of intellectual exertion he was equally distinguished, and reached the periphery of his sphere, a brilliant but a regular orb. In a word, and without badinage, in the truest sense he illustrated in himself the distinction between genius and talent; for, destitute of every particle and atom of the former, he is justly entitled to be honoured in the very first class of those who are acknowledged by all their friends to possess a



full measure of the latter. In every thing within the scope of his universal aims he has merited praise—never once admiration—a gem, but a topaz, not a diamond; neither amber nor paste, yet unquestionably a precious stone.

This eminent person was born, according to a memorandum in his mother's prayer-book, on the 27th of December 1727, at Clooniquin, in the county of Roscommon, Ireland. His father was a merchant in Dublin, and sailed in a vessel belonging to himself for Philadelphia—an unfortunate voyage, for the ship with all on board was never after heard of. From that period his mother resided in a house on George's Quay, which had been built by her husband, till December 1735, when, by the advice of her brother, she sold her property in Dublin, and removed to Argyle Buildings, London.

But the young adventurer, the subject of these memoirs, did not continue long in the British metropolis. A sister of his mother being at that time settled with her family at Boulogne, requested that he should be sent to her. Accordingly, in the year 1736, he embarked, and found her with a numerous family in a large house, near the church in the lower town. With this lady he resided as one of her own sons till 1738, when on account of her health, she was advised by her physicians to visit the South of France.

Arthur Murphy, turned of ten years old, was then sent to the college at St. Omer's, and in that seminary he remained six years. This was the customary period that students attended; for the college was divided into six schools, or classes, and a year was appropriated to each, still under the same master, who began with the lowest, and at the end of the year went on with his pupils to the second class, taking with him such as he deemed qualified to go forward. In this way he accompanied them to the sixth class, when the course of their education was considered as finished.

In the life written by Murphy himself there are some little slips and inadvertencies of dates. He states, for example, that in February 1734 he was placed in the lowest school; but it was in 1736 that he was sent to Boulogne, and as he mentions that in 1744 he left the college, being then in his seventeenth year, the correction of this error, which would be important only in his horoscope, is easily adjusted.

At school he was, by his own report, a distinguished boy. In the fifth year he stood a public examination of the *Æneid* by heart, in which he acquitted himself with applause; but when he returned to London his classic erudition was destined to suffer humiliation, for he could not answer a very simple arithmetical question; but this deficiency was rectified in an academy near Charing Cross.

In August 1747 he was sent to the counting-house of an eminent merchant in Cork, where he remained a clerk till April 1749. During his residence at Cork his uncle, who had an estate in Jamaica, destined him for that island; but it was not agreeable to himself, and in consequence he returned to his mother, and was taken into a banking-house as a clerk, in Lombard-street, where he continued till the end of 1751.

At this period the playhouses had rich attractions. The actors

were the most distinguished in the annals of the stage, and London had many advantages which in this our age have disappeared, particularly in the nightly meetings of the town wits at the Bedford coffee-house in the Piazza of Covent-Garden, and George's, at Temple Bar. To these haunts of genius Murphy made his way, and smit with the love of fame resolved to commence author. Accordingly on Saturday, October 21, 1752, he valiantly published the first number of *THE GRAY'S INN JOURNAL*, which he conducted, with some distinction, till 1754.

Though it must be regarded as a juvenile work, it yet contains several clever papers. Number XXXIX., a burlesque prediction on the consequences of naturalising the Jews, a project at that time as much in vogue as it has been recently in our own, has a great deal of playful merit. And a judicious criticism in Number LXXIII. was honoured with a growl of approbation from Dr. Johnson.

At this period Garrick being the god of his idolatry, he took some offence at a preference which Morgan—the author of *Philocha*, a tragedy—had for Barry, and in consequence was involved in a duel. He was about the same epoch beset with other misfortunes: his uncle died, and left him nothing, and a play he had given to Garrick was not brought out as he expected, an indignity which he resented by returning to the monarch manager the free-admission ticket which he had enjoyed to Drury Lane. Nevertheless, his predilection for the drama continued, and on the advice of Foote he determined to go upon the stage. Accordingly, on the 21st September, 1754, he concluded “*The Gray's Inn Journal*,” and soon after appeared on the boards of Covent Garden, as *Othello*. He owed at this time about 300*l.*, which, in the course of the season, he contrived, by good management, to reduce.

He was next year engaged at Drury Lane by Garrick, and with the profits of his farce *The Apprentice*, which was first performed that season, with his salary and benefit, he cleared about 800*l.*; and in the summer of 1756, having nearly 400*l.* in his pocket, resolved on leaving the stage, and to devote himself to the study of the law.

He gives no explanation of the motives by which he was actuated in this determination; for though undoubtedly his appearance on the stage was not so brilliant as that of Garrick, it was highly respectable, and, in all things, according to the most approved Green-room orthodoxy. He possessed figure, voice, talent, and judgment, but none of that rare element of which excellence is made. It must not, however, be concealed, that he estimated himself among the players at perhaps a little more than his value, or than they were willing to allow; and probably conceived he was not exactly in his proper sphere; for being higher in his origin than they are in general, and being likewise of a disposition not to abate any deference to which he might imagine himself entitled, it is easy to conceive that his superciliousness may have been the cause for changing his profession.

At the beginning of 1757 he offered to enter himself a Student of the Middle Temple; but the benchers objected to receive him, because he had been an actor. He then applied to the Society of Gray's Inn, where he met with a similar refusal. The conduct of

these two learned bodies was, in this instance, mean; for in all professions which have for their object the acquisition of a livelihood, it ought rather to be the system of the higher to encourage candidates for election to come from the lower. But it is not among men whose importance has been so much fenced as that of the lawyers, that we should look for liberality; and yet can aught be more absurd than that, in a vocation where every thing depends on the man himself, fitness should not be considered as the true qualification? Murphy felt the repulse as if it had been a personal insult, and was fired with indignation; but to be so affected by what was probably a general rule, only shows how much more highly he considered himself than he ought to have done. He was, however, obliged to endure the exclusion; but instead of going again on the stage, he employed himself on a weekly paper, *THE TEST*,\* devoted to the politics of Henry Fox. His patron, afterwards Lord Holland, spoke to Lord Mansfield of his rejection by the benchers of the Temple and of Gray's Inn, and his Lordship advised Murphy to offer himself at Lincoln's Inn, which he did, and was admitted. But the drama was still attractive, and in the following year his farce of *The Upholsterer* was produced with great success. His next piece was *The Orphan of China*. In 1760 he also composed *The Desert Island*, and *The Way to keep Him*, which was at first in three acts, but afterwards enlarged in 1761 into a five act comedy; in the same year he likewise brought out *All in the Wrong*; *The Citizen*, and *The Old Maid*. All these pieces have undoubtedly the merit of being amusingly interesting in the representation, when aided by suitable talents in the actors; in the closet, however, this is less obvious, for they have little of that brilliancy of dialogue which constitutes so much of what is deservedly considered as the wit of comedy.

In 1762 he was called to the bar, and his law studies were enlivened by having engaged in *THE AUDITOR*, in defence of Lord Bute against Wilkes's virulence in the North Briton.

In the summer of 1763, he went to Norfolk circuit, from which he returned with an empty purse. It was with reference to this occasion that his satirical friend Foote used to say, "that Murphy went the circuit in a stage-coach, and came home in the basket." In Trinity term 1764, he made his first effort at the bar, and was complimented by Lord Mansfield; flattered by the distinction, he applied himself to the law with closer assiduity, but still his heart lay more to mimic scenes than real life. He wrote the farce of *Three Weeks after Marriage*; and, in 1768, his tragedy of *Zenobia* was performed with distinguished success. In 1772 he produced *The Grecian Daughter*, which still maintains an occasional place in the series of those pieces which young actresses think necessary to go through before considering their reputations established. The play itself is only a regular piece

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\* In conducting *THE TEST*, he used to send his manuscripts for inspection to a small house at the back of the public house at the Western corner of the Park of Holland House, and from thence they were returned with instructions how to proceed.

of heavy literature,—a leaden statue resembling some Athenian marble, a Parisian lay figure. In the following year his *Alcuma* was performed at Covent Garden ; and, in 1777, *Know your own Mind*. But it would be departing widely from the general design of this work either to enumerate or criticise each of his twenty-three dramatic productions.

At this time the study of the law continued to engross his attention ; he was, however, less distinguished in Westminster-hall than in the theatre, a circumstance that distinctly points out the mediocrity of his talents ; and yet it would seem that the praise of industry in cultivating them cannot be withheld. At the same time, although he relinquished the bar, in 1787, in a pet, it does not appear, even by his own account, that he was qualified to attain any very eminent station in that renowned profession. He was doomed to mediocrity from his birth ; and in consequence, although no misfortune of a very sullen hue seems at any period to have darkened his career, he never could rise higher in the scale of distinction than the limit prescribed by moderation.

On leaving the bar, he bought a house on Hammersmith-terrace, facing the Thames, the westernmost on the row, where he prepared his translation of Tacitus for the press. The distance from town was, however, inconvenient, and he removed to Knightsbridge.

At this time he had been many years a Commissioner of Bankrupts, which he owed to Lord Loughborough, and attended regularly at Guildhall, till increasing infirmities admonished him to resign. He then wrote a letter to Lord Eldon, the Chancellor, requesting that his resignation might be received ; but his Lordship, instead of accepting it, wrote him a most friendly letter, submitting, to his consideration whether his brother commissioners would not give that assistance to a gentleman so justly entitled to their respect, which his health might require ; and concluded by kindly saying, that, till he heard further from him, he would not notice the intention he had expressed. But the answer of Murphy contained his resignation.

In March 1803 his Majesty was pleased to assent to a proposal from Mr. Addington, (Lord Sidmouth,) to grant a pension to Murphy. As it is not often that instances of such consideration are bestowed on literary endeavours, it will give pleasure to see the record of this one, which appears particularly honourable to his Lordship.

“Treasury-chambers, Whitehall, March 1, 1803.

“SIR,

“I AM directed by Mr. Addington to acquaint you, that his Majesty has been pleased to grant you a pension of two hundred pounds per annum, to take place from the 5th of January last.

“Mr. Addington was induced to move his Majesty to confer this mark of favour upon you by no solicitation from any quarter, but from a desire to reward an author who for many years has contributed to the entertainment and instruction of the public.

“Permit me to add, that having had the honour of meeting you formerly at Lincoln’s-inn, and wishing well on all occasions to the

cause of literature, I have a particular pleasure in making this communication to you.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,  
 “Your most obedient humble servant,  
 “JOHN SARGENT.”

“To Arthur Murphy, Esq.”

In no period of his life could it be said that Murphy ever attained affluence, but the comforts he enjoyed were not derived from the profits of literature only, for besides his pension he had an annuity from a relation of two hundred pounds a year, and therefore did not come within the scope of those to whom the pathetic remark of Dryden applies. “It will continue,” says that illustrious genius, “to mark the ingratitude of mankind, that they who teach wisdom by the surest means shall generally live poor and unregarded, as if they were born only for the public and had no interest in their well-being, but were to be lighted up like tapers, and to waste themselves for the benefit of others.”

On the 18th of June 1805, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, he expired, and was interred in Hammersmith church, in the same vault with his mother.

## THOMAS KING.

THOMAS KING was born in the parish of St. George, Hanover-square, in August 1730, educated at Westminster school, and, being intended for the law, articulated to an attorney. But his early predilection for the exhibitions of the stage soon interfered with his intended profession. He first became an amateur performer, and in his seventeenth year, having determined to obey the influences of his stars, ran away from the desk, and joined a troop of strollers then performing at Tunbridge.

In so far his early history appears not to have been very different from that of the common progeny of Thespis. The buoyancy of his spirits in old age bore testimony to the hilarity of his youthful temperament, and his clopement from the desk was a becoming prologue to his subsequent adventures. He was evidently a sprightly apprentice, inheriting from Nature a competent share of recklessness, and bearing himself so bravely to Fortune that she was never able to crush his courage.

Some pains have been taken in the *Biographia Dramatica* to describe him as a gentleman descended by his father's side from a respectable family in Hampshire, and that his mother was of the Blisses of Gloucestershire—but who were these Blisses? The fact of his being, after his aspiring enterprize to Tunbridge, allowed to sow his wild oats as an unvalued vagabond, shows that his family could not afford to seek him, and that this vamped-up pedigree must be ret-

garded about as real as the glass diamonds and other trumpery of the green-room.

From Tunbridge he became a legitimate stroller, and studied tragedy, comedy, pastoral, and farce, in booths and barns, gathering renown from the profitless plaudits of bumpkins. In this career he encountered all the variegated calamities that players are heir to, accidents and expedients diversified with mirth and melancholy, which in after years often enlivened the topics of his conversation. He once walked from Beaconsfield to London and back in the same day, to raise a small sum to purchase properties, as they are technically called, for his appearance at night in the character of Richard III. The profits of the play to him were threepence-halfpenny, and a share of the candle-ends which survived the performance: the latter he laid a votive offering at the shrine of a green-room goddess.

In the summer of 1748 he performed in a booth at Windsor, and from this time the Fates that had malignantly frowned upon his fortunes,

“Relax’d their brows and dress’d their eyes with smiles.”

Garrick, who as a manager had a quick ear to theatrical merit wherever it could be heard of in the kingdom, was induced by the report of his abilities to visit Windsor, and having seen him perform, engaged him for two seasons to play at Drury Lane, where, on the 19th of October, 1748, he made his first appearance as Allworth, in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

But although Garrick has undoubtedly the honour of having justly appreciated the talents of young King, Mrs. Pritchard is entitled to the praise of nicer discernment for discovering his peculiar forte. In the summer following she belonged to a company then performing at the theatre of Jacob’s Well near Bristol, with which King was also engaged; persuaded that the cast of his abilities was comic, she made a point that he should play Benedict to her Beatrice, Ranger to her Clarinda, &c. But, nevertheless, it was thought by many that the buskin suited him best, for he enacted Romeo, George Barnwell, &c., and Whitehead, the Poet Laureate, afterwards, in his drama of *The Roman Father*, assigned to him the part of Valerius.

King himself was, however, conscious of his own endowments, and finding himself seldom allowed to wear the sock, and having now acquired some of the actor’s capital, reputation, he quitted the English stage and went to Dublin, where he continued several seasons with rising fame and increasing profit. But he was induced by the exhortations of Mrs. Woffington to return to London. Not, however, succeeding in forming a suitable engagement with the managers there, he accepted an offer from the proprietors of the Bath theatre to be principal performer and manager, in both of which capacities he satisfied alike the public and his employers.

Mr. Sheridan, the father of the orator, having resumed the management of the Dublin playhouse, which he had resigned before King left it, persuaded him to go back, where he remained nearly two years,—indeed, until Sheridan thought fit to retire.

In 1759, looking with ambition and regret to Drury Lane, he re-

turned to London, and, at the commencement of the season, having entered into another engagement with Garrick, made his appearance as Tom in *The Conscious Lovers* with distinguished reputation. In the course of this year he added considerably to his celebrity by the style in which he performed Squire Groom in *L'aveu-à-la-Mode*, then acted for the first time.

But, although now considered an eminent performer, he was not yet reckoned in the highest class of the profession, nor, indeed, for some years after. It was in 1766-7, as Lord Ogleby in *The Clandestine Marriage*, that he achieved his fame; by his excellent conception of that part, and the felicitous manner in which every point and turn were executed; it is allowed by all those who recollect his performance to have been one of the happiest histrionic efforts that the stage has produced.

This comedy was the joint composition of Garrick and Colman, although the *Biographia Dramatica* states, on the authority of a gentleman who reported, as he said, from Colman himself, that "Garrick composed two acts, which he sent to me, desiring me to put them together, or do what I could with them; I did put them together, for I put them into the fire, and wrote the play myself."

But, in this statement, the authors of the *Biographia Dramatica* have been misled; and, therefore, as it is always interesting to correct any curious point in literary history, and as I have it in my power to set the facts of this case clear, I may be permitted to deviate from the general plan of my undertaking, in this instance, to do so. I have before me a letter from Colman to Garrick, in which he says:—

4th December 1765.

"Since my return from Bath I have been told, but I can hardly believe it, that in speaking of the '*Clandestine Marriage*,' you have gone as far as to say, 'Colman lays a great stress on his having written this character (Lord Ogilby) on purpose for me: suppose it should come out that *I wrote it*! That the truth should come out is my earnest desire; but I should be extremely sorry for your sake, that it should come out by such a declaration from you. Of all men in the world, I believe I may venture to say that I should be one of the last to take any thing to myself of which I was not the author: and I should hope you could never so much forget yourself, and what is due to an old faithful friend, as to endeavour to fasten such an imputation on me. In the present case you must be sensible that such an insinuation from you must place me in that ridiculous light; but you know that it was not I but yourself who desired secrecy in relation to our partnership, and you may remember the reasons you gave for it. You know, too, that, on the publication of the play, the whole affair was to come out, and that both our names were to appear together in the title page.

"Though I cannot believe, till I have the most indisputable proof of it, that you have thus suffered your anger to betray yourself to me, yet it puzzles me to account for an indifferent person's knowing so much of the matter; and I must own that I am not only hurt by what I hear you have said, but by what I have known you have

written. In your letter to Clutterbuck, which is a kind of memorial against your old friend, you tell him, 'that you have formed a plan of a comedy called *The Sisters*; that I had brought some city characters into it; and, moreover, that if the piece did not succeed, you had promised to take your part, with the shame that might belong to it, to yourself.' I cannot quote the words of your letter, but I am sure I have not misrepresented the purport of it, though the whole is diametrically opposite to my notion of the state of the partnership subsisting between us. You have the plan of *The Sisters* by you, read it, and see if there are in it any traces of *The Clandestine Marriage*. You returned me the rough draught which I drew out of that story, and, thinking it might be of use in conducting the plot, I happened to preserve it; let them be compared, and see what is the resemblance between them. The first plate of Hogarth's 'Marriage-à-la-mode,' was the ground I went upon; I had long wished to see these characters on the stage, and mentioned them as proper objects of comedy, before I had the pleasure of your acquaintance, in a letter written expressly in your defence against the attacks of your old arch-enemy, Shirley.

"Again, was there any promise of your taking your part to yourself out of tenderness to my reputation? I do not remember it. I understood it was to be a joint work in the fullest sense of the word, and never imagined that either of us, was to lay his finger on any particular scene and cry, 'This is mine.' It is true indeed, that, by your suggestion, Hogarth's proud lord was converted into Lord Ogleby, and, as the play now stands, the levee scene at the beginning of the second act, and the whole of the fifth act are yours; but in the conduct as well as the dialogue of the fourth act, I think your favourite, Lord Ogleby, has some obligations to me. However, if that be the part of the play which you are desirous to rest your fame upon I would not have differed with you about the glory of it; but I cannot help being hurt at your betraying so earnest a desire to winnow your wheat from my chaff, at the very time that I was eager to bestow the highest polish on every part of the work, only in the hopes of perpetuating our joint labours by raising a monument of the friendship between me and Mr. Garrick. If I could have awakened the genius of Shakspeare I would have done it; not for the sake of adding to my own reputation, but that it might reflect an honour on us both. I do most solemnly protest that I felt myself more interested as a friend, than as an author, in *The Clandestine Marriage*, and there was nothing in my power which I would not have undertaken in order to add to the brilliancy of its success. Judge, then, of my disappointment to find you so cold and dead to all these feelings? Was it behaving towards me with your usual openness and ingenuousness of temper to reserve from me the communication of your intentions on a point wherein our interest was mutual, till after the commencement of the season? In all our conversations concerning your return to the stage, for you always allowed a possibility, did you ever tell me that if you did return, you would never play in a new piece, never play in *The Clandestine Marriage*? Did you not often regret the want of a performer for this character; and did not I often express my hopes that



you might still perform it? Did you throw cold water on these hopes by any other manner than saying you did not believe you should ever play at all? Nay, when your return to the stage was mentioned among your friends, and I joined in dissuading you from it, did you not openly applaud my disinterestedness, saying that your absence to me would be of more consequence than to any other person? Had I then the least reason to think that, if you *did* return, you would have any objection to do the business you carved out for yourself? So far was I from the slightest suspicion of it, that, some days after opening the theatre, when you first mentioned this matter to me at Richmond, although you then made no positive declaration, I was thunderstruck. Happening to come up to town next morning I heard, to my farther surprise, that you had declared your intention in the most open as well as positive manner behind the scenes: the whole theatre was acquainted with a circumstance which was the most profound secret to me not twenty-four hours before. Ten days or a fortnight afterwards came our conference before your brother in Johnson's parlour; but your behaviour to me in the intermediate time, as well as then, showed that you had imagined I had been sensibly affected by your unexpected conversation at Richmond; for how did you treat me? Like a friend who had written in concert with you? even like an author with whom you were on tolerable terms? You formally demanded to know my positive resolutions; you told me you would now consider the work as *solely mine*, that you must settle your business, that you had offers of other plays, etc. This was strange manager-like language to your friend and fellow scribbler; so strange that, from that hour, I concluded, I had lost your confidence, and did not wonder that you were unwilling to exert your endeavours to establish the credit of a work which was to degrade your name by joining it to mine.

"A word or two more and I have done. You tell Clutterbuck that, if I will not consent to the play's being done this season, you will put a negative on its being played at all. Is it possible you could know me so little as to suppose I ever dreamed of it? If what was undertaken on my part, chiefly with a desire of perpetuating and strengthening the connexion between us, was only to serve as the era of its dissolution, the object for which I laboured vanished, and the appearance of our joint work would rather give me pain than pleasure. You also complain of what I have said on this occasion to other people; I will not recriminate upon you, nor will I attempt to excuse my own peevishness; I will only say that I had a right to tell my friends that I had withdrawn the piece, as well as to assign your refusing to play, as the reason for it. Indeed, I could not see how I could well do otherwise. As to the words you charge me with, I never uttered them; and, on the whole, I flatter myself you never had a difference with any friend who behaved with more moderation.

"For both our sakes, the secret of our partnership, I think, ought to be made known; on your part the world would see that you have acted with no more rigour towards me than you have exercised on yourself, and I shall be delivered from the suspicion of the meanness of fathering a work of which I am not the author. Hereafter, there-

fore. I shall take the liberty of mentioning the true state of the case, unless you let me know within a few days that you have an objection to it.

"I could not bring myself to the formality of addressing you with *Sir* at opening my letter, though you have *Mistered* me in yours to Clutterbuck and Schomberg, and I hope you will excuse my subscribing myself

"Your old friend,

"GEORGE COLMAN."

Never was any document more decisive than this letter : not only the partnership, but the respective parts of the authors of *The clandestine Marriage* are pointed out. But let us see what Garrick says in reply.

"MR. GARRICK TO GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

"Southampton-street, Dec. 5, 1765.

"THOUGH I am to obey his Majesty's commands this evening, and my head is full of the character I am to play, yet I will answer your long letter however hastily or inaccurately.

"You should not accuse me of any thing in our present circumstances without mentioning your author ; let me know what indifferent person told you, and I will answer both him and you. I hope I shall always know what is due to myself and an old friend ; and by having that best of feelings, I was astonished and unhappy to hear that you had complained of me (peevishly, indeed,) for not acting the character you had written on purpose for me : and that if you did not add that *there was an end of our friendship* I was misinformed ; the former part was told me by several not indifferent persons, viz., Mr. Kent, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Strahan, etc. Your suspicions of my behaving in a *manager-like manner* before you went to Bath, are very unworthy of you : I never assumed the consequence of a manager to any body. (for I know that fools may be, and that many fools have been, managers,) much less to one whom—I leave your own heart to apply the rest. I was hurt to see you persevere in a point, which in the end would be of so little consequence to you, and of so much to me. If any of our friends, (to whom I dare refer this affair,) will pronounce that you were friendly or kind in insisting upon my return to the stage in the manner I should have done by acting in a new play. I will own that I am unfit for society, and unworthy the name of friend : but, on the other hand, if they should declare that my plan of happiness was not to be broken in upon by any peculiar notions of yours, it will appear that your peevishness, as you are pleased to call it (before you went to Bath,) gave the first stab to our friendship.

"Though I think your account of the comedy somewhat erroneous, yet I shall not enter into that lesser consideration of who did this or who did that, but return to matters of more consequence : I will adjust that business very easily when called upon. I am sorry that you have given a kind of hint at obligations by your mention of Mr.

Shirley. I may be mistaken, but when I recollect my being taxed by a lady before company, of not doing so much for you as you have done for me, or words of the same import, and having heard since of her great warmth in our affair, I own myself surprised, and would wish for both our sakes that no account *countant*, (as there ought to be none in friendship,) may be produced on either side. You say, that you never knew of my resolution not to act in a *new piece* till after the season had commenced : I am greatly deceived if I cannot mention some persons, among which is one of your own friends, who can attest the contrary. Another part of your letter mentions my desire 'to winnow my wheat from your chaff,'—what can you possibly mean by that ? And do you think I have so much vanity of the author ? I am sure you cannot. I suspected, indeed, from your unfriendly demand upon me, and from words you dropped, of not being able to read the part of Lord Ogleby, and which is now confirmed by your tauntingly giving the glory of the fourth to me, that you thought my portion of the play could only be supported by my own acting, and that you rather chose to ask what could not be granted, than tell me your doubts of my part of the work. This I mentioned very sincerely to Clutterbuck ; but whatever are our opinions upon this head is now of very little consequence, and if I guess right the chief matter to be answered in your letter is, whether the secret shall be told or not. As I have not been allowed to have any determination in the determination in the disposal of the unhappy comedy, I beg that you will act from your own discretion and feeling, and do whatever you please in the affair, only permitting me to subscribe myself,

“ Your old friend,

“ D. GARRICK.

“ P.S. In my hurry I have overlooked something that you lay a great stress upon. You speak of my treatment of you at Richmond ; are you really in earnest to upbraid me with saying that I should consider the work as *solely yours* ? Did I or could I mean any thing but that you should dispose of it as you pleased ? Were we not then the best friends, and till very near the time of your going to Bath, when I saw, with the greatest concern, a change in your looks and behaviour ? And could there be any thing of *manager-like* language in telling you I must fix the business of the season, and if you would not suffer our play to be acted I must accept of other offers to supply its place ? Can any thing be more reasonable or less unfriendly ? and should not I rather accuse you of using me in a strange manner by withdrawing the piece, when I had a share in it, and reckoned upon its appearance ? I have ever thought you and loved you as an affectionate friend ; but, surely, your leaving London so abruptly, and leaving complaints of me behind you, were not among the many instances of your kindness and moderation to me ; and if I betray a any warmth in consequence of your conduct such warmth was at least more natural and excusable than your own.”

To complete this little episode of literary jealousy, I will add the reply of Colman.

“Dec. 6, 1765.

“I AM sorry you gave yourself the trouble of answering my letter at a time when you might have been so much better employed ; however, if I may judge of your performance last night, it did you no more hurt than I think your playing Lord Ogleby would do you. As a correspondence of this nature, so different from what I expected ever to open with you, must, I suppose, be irksome to you as myself, I will be as brief as possible. I will speak to no points but what are directly in answer to your last ; and if, contrary to my intentions, my letter should be drawn out to any length, I hope you will the more readily excuse it, when I promise you that it is the last I will send you on this very disagreeable subject.

“If you ever spoke those memorable words mentioned in my last, you must easily recollect to whom they were spoken. It was needless, therefore, for me to point out the particular person, especially as it was not by him they were reported to me. I told you I could hardly believe you capable of having uttered them, and hoped that if you favoured me with an answer, you could and would have assured me that you never did. If you did, I must say, (as you do of my suspicions,) they were unworthy of you ; and it is no wonder that I should desire the true state of the case to be made known, rather than be under the imputation which they carried with them.

“My mention of Shirley was purely accidental, and never meant to convey the sense which you have extracted ; but, if my expressions with their gloss upon them can be interpreted as glancing in the least towards *debtor and creditor*, I take shame upon myself for having made use of them. However, you have been more than even with me by what you say of a certain person. I am quite of Lockit's opinion that, among good friends, whatever they say or do, goes for nothing. That person, I am sure, has always had the greatest respect for you ; and, if there were any offensive words carried to you, they were occasioned by some irritating expressions brought from you. Spaniels who will fetch and carry may be useful ; but, whenever they lay hold of any thing, they do so tumble and distigure it, that, when it comes out of their mouths, one can scarce discover it to be the same. The words thrown out before company I do not remember, but I think it very possible for you to have misconceived them, as I see you did what I said of my not being able to read the part of Lord Ogleby. I might intend it as a sincere compliment to your talent as an actor, but most certainly never meant a reflection on your abilities as an author. There are characters where the writer must necessarily leave a great deal to the player ; Lord Ogleby is one them ; and I know no player that can so well fill up such passages as yourself. I am sorry to find, after having for so many years past opened my heart to you very freely, that you should suppose that I would rather choose to ask what could not be granted, than to tell you my doubts of your portion of the work ; did I ever deal that way with you in any other matter ? I hate all crooked politics. I have written in concert before, and I have seen more manuscripts than ever I desire to see again ; but I cannot tax myself with having in one instance dissembled my real sentiments. Why then should you, my particular

friend, suspect me of trifling with you ? Why might not I reprehend what I disliked without your immediately crying, *I am always very ready to give up what I write*, as if it was a quality peculiar to yourself ! and why might not I confess what I approved without suspicion of flattery or dissimulation ?

“ You tell me that you are greatly deceived if you cannot produce some persons, among which is one of my own friends, who can attest that I knew of your resolution not to act in a new piece, before the season commenced—you are very greatly deceived indeed. May I never be believed to speak one word of truth, and I know no greater curse, if I had the least conception of it till the time mentioned at large in my last letter ! Nay, in some fond moment, I had flattered myself that though you never regularly list yourself again in the service of the public, you might, perhaps, be tempted to act as a volunteer in *The Clandestine Marriage*. I was even weak enough to communicate these hopes to a particular friend, who was of our counsel. You see from what a mountain of hope I have fallen, and cannot wonder if I have received some little shock. On the whole it was not my unfriendly and unreasonable demand, but your long reserve, and most unexpected denial of what I thought would never have been questioned, that has occasioned our difference.

“ I cannot reconcile your desiring the play to be considered as solely mine, with your complaints of being allowed to have any determination in the disposal of the comedy, when you had a share in it ; but if you now claim the right of your affirmative voice, as in your letter to Clutterbuck you laid your claim to a negative one, you are welcome, if you please, to put the play into rehearsal ; but as it is against my opinion, I hope you will not be farther offended that I give myself no concern about it.

“ I have sent you the fifth act as you desired ; but have had neither leisure nor inclination to compare it with that left by your brother yesterday. You know that it was my opinion that it wanted retrenching ; but for near two months I have been totally incapable of that task, as I could never, without pain, turn my eyes or thoughts on *The Clandestine Marriage*—this unhappy comedy, as you very properly call it.

“ You take great advantage of my acknowledgement of my own peevishness, and in one part of your letter seem to imply it deserved a harder name. You are pleased also to bandy about the words *unfriendly* and *unreasonable*, very liberally, both in your letter to me and to Dr. Clutterbuck. The fact must speak for itself, and declare on which side friendship and reason has been most violated ; wherefore, all the notice I shall take of those marks of your ill-humour, is to wish that you may find all your other acquaintances less peevish, and more friendly, and more reasonable, and more faithful, than

“ Your old friend,

“ GEORGE COLMAN.”

These letters are curious, as relates to the authorship of the comedy, the quarrel, and the appearance of Garrick as Lord Ogleby. It would seem, as it has been generally believed, that he wrote that

ingenious part for himself, and that he had from the first, agreed with Colman to act it. I do not, therefore, think it a far-fetched inference to say from these vouchers, that the quarrel had tended to make him dislike the part, and was the cause of his resigning it to King. It has been supposed, that to avoid the positive identity of manner with Lord Chalkstone, in his own farce of *Lethe*, he made the surrender of the part : for the two characters are greatly similar : and perhaps it had some influence in determining him.

But there is a still more curious circumstance connected with the authorship of this celebrated play, than even the squabble between Garrick and Colman. The piece is a plagiarism from *The False Concord*, a farce acted at Covent Garden, March 20, 1764, for the benefit of Woodward ; but not printed. The author was the Rev. James Townley, Master of Merchant Taylor's School.\* In the farce were three characters, Lord Lavendre, Mr. Suds, a soap-boiler, and a pert valet, which were transplanted, with the dialogue of some scenes, into *The Coelestine Marriage*, under the names of Lord Ogleby, Mr. Sterling, and Mr. Brush. These facts were first made public by Mr. Roberdeau, the gentleman who married a daughter of Mr. Townley.

But to return to King. Mrs. Inchbald has said of the character of Lord Ogleby, in which he was so distinguished, that "it is an evidence of the fluctuation of manners, modes, and opinions—forty years ago, it was reckoned so natural a representation of a man of fashion, that several noblemen were said to have been in the author's thoughts, when he designed the character ; now no part is so little understood in the play ; and his foibles seem so discordant with the manly faults of the present time, that his good qualities cannot atone for them." This, however, is shallow criticism, for it has been justly said in reply, that "considered merely as a delineation of manners, Lord Ogleby is no doubt a fleeting and fugacious being ; but the foundation of his artificial character is so noble, so generous, and so kindly, that, whenever, it can find a proper representative, it must continue to excite our sympathies." And certainly this more acute observation has been confirmed by the reputation which Mr. Farren has acquired in it, in our own time. The manners of the play are, perhaps, a little obsolete, inasmuch as comedy depends so much in representing "the manners living as they rise" correctly ; but Lord Ogleby is one of those felicitous conceptions that will remain ever green, flourishing as long as Nature can delight and affectations be ridiculous.

From his appearance in Lord Ogleby, King is commonly said to have possessed the confidence of Garrick—it would be more justly to allege the reverse ; for among the Garrick papers there are no important traces of the fact ; and the following letters respecting an engagement in King's life, though they showed the strong attachment of the actor to the manager, help but little to prove it was reciprocal.

“Saturday, April 29, 1769.

“Mr. Garrick’s compliments to Mr. King : though he is seldom surprised at what may happen in a theatre, yet he would be obliged to Mr. King if he would let him know, by a note, what he was pleased to say of him and the farce of *The Invasion*, to Mr. Hopkins. Mr. Garrick assures Mr. King, that he will not send his answer to the prompter, but to himself.”

The inference from this note is, that some of the common theatrical tattle, to which Garrick is alleged to have been too sensitive, had at this time disturbed him ; all that I have been able to trace concerning it is, that about two years prior, there was an entertainment called *The Invasion* then in the hands of the actors, as appears by a letter from King to Garrick, dated Liverpool, 24th July 1767, respecting which the writer says,

“As to *The Invasion*, I think it would be proper that I should keep my part, and Parsons be put into Snip. Should Yates think better of it, and take the covenant, you will undoubtedly choose to have him reinstated. Parsons has played the Harlequin one night for me : now, by this means, should sickness or any accident befall Yates or me, you will be at a certainty ; the entertainment need not be stopped, as he will then be ready to supply the place of either of us—Am I right ?”

Those who are curious in such matters, may be able to settle this point by referring to the play-bills of the time, and as I do not deem it of any importance, I have only to mention, that in 1759 a farce called *Invasion* was printed, but never acted. It only ridicules the unnecessary apprehensions which were then entertained on account of the threatened invasion of the flat-bottomed boats from France. But there was another entertainment, called *Harlequin’s Invasion*, a Christmas gambol, also brought out in 1759, and often performed at Drury Lane. The plan of this, however, is a supposed invasion made by Harlequin and his train upon the domains of Shakespeare. The characters are made to speak, and the catastrophe is the defeat of Harlequin. The dialogue was furnished by Mr. Garrick, who originally wrote some parts of it to serve a favourite performer at Bartholomew Fair. It is to this piece that the misunderstanding, I imagine, relates.

But the letter to which I particularly alluded, as tending to illustrate the nature of the friendship between King and Garrick, is the following, in answer to the note of the latter.

“DEAR SIR,

Russell Street, April 30, 1757.

“As to what passed between Mr. Hopkins and me concerning *The Invasion*—as I have a better opinion of his integrity than of my own memory, I should have referred you to him for the account, had you not desired to have it under my hand—I have committed it to paper, I hope with a proper regard for truth, and as minutely as I am able.

“You are, I find, displeased with my conduct ; no one thing on earth can make me more unhappy—I have offended by giving my

sentiments *to*, and sending a message *by*, the prompter. Let me, if I can, justify myself. When Mr. Lacy and you are on the spot, if I have anything that I think necessary to communicate to both, I always trouble Mr. G. Garrick, who kindly, in such cases, becomes a middle man, and acts for all parties. When you retire for a time, I look on Mr. G. Garrick as your representative; if I have any thing in the way of business to settle with *the managers*, I think it necessary for some other person to act for me. Who so likely to find the managers together as the prompter? Nay, I believe in every theatre where they are not happy enough to have a person of so useful and friendly a turn as Mr. Garrick, messages relative to the business of the stage are sent or given to the prompter, and I have ever thought it a part of his office to receive and deliver them. You desire I would let you know what I was pleased to say about *you* and the farce. I declare, upon my honour, that I do not recollect that your name was mentioned, nor do I remember that there was any thing particular said about the farce; but, as I have said before, I must refer you to Mr. Hopkins: some parts of the conversation may have slipped my memory, and I have not the least apprehension of his doing me injustice. I shall only say, that it was out of my power, either on this or on any other occasion, whenever your name could be mentioned, to treat it otherwise than with a warmth of respect little short of enthusiasm; and I defy the world, replete as it is with rascals, to produce one base enough to contradict me.

"I have since your departure for Bath been most indelicately treated in many particulars, which I now shall never trouble you with a mention of. I flattered myself for some days past, that on your return to town, I should again have the pleasure of taking you by the hand, and, as usual, trusted you with everything that had made, or could make me happy; on the contrary, your desiring an explanation in a *note*, seemed to forbid my waiting on you. Depend upon it, dear Sir, I shall not become a trespasser. I *know*—I *feel* myself unworthily treated. I must and will assert, though that assertion shall never be made but to yourself, that your suspecting any part of the warmth of my attachment to you is uncandid, and your severity (for I shall never call *coolness* from *you* by any other name) unwarrantable. I have for some time rejoiced in supposing myself an object of your esteem—while you seemed to think me deserving of it, I could have died to convince you it was not improperly placed; but you have suspected me, and I shall say but little more. Had I been a prince, I should have prided myself in having Mr. Garrick for my friend; but were I this moment shirtless, I would not wholly give up the duty I owe myself merely because he is my employer.

"I am ever and shall be, dear Sir,

"Your most ardent well-wisher,

"And very humble servant,

"THOMAS KING.

"You were some time ago anxious lest some of your letters should fall into improper hands; I take the liberty to inclose your last for your reperusal, and beg you will indulge me by burning it. Such a



note found after my decease would go near to convince some friends whose good opinion I covet, that I had most basely forfeited the favour of a man whose friendly attachment to me was for some time my greatest, almost my only boast."

What inference are we to draw from Garrick having preserved the note so carefully?

Other letters from King to Garrick have been preserved; but while they evince the greatest attachment to the manager, the proof is not so clear that Garrick's friendship was equally ardent. He was, indeed, too anxious to build himself a name, ever to feel that warmth of regard to any man which King professed for him.

When Garrick sold his share in Drury Lane theatre, and was about to retire, King, it has been reported, also wished to take leave of the public, but was induced, both by the seller and buyer, to remain. In 1777, when *The School for Scandal* was produced, he is supposed to have added a shade of variety to his fame, by the manner of his performance as Sir Peter Teazle, which, without so much of refinement and affectation as his Lord Ogleby, displayed a no less just conception of the peculiarities of an old gentleman of a graver cast. He likewise performed Puff in *The Critic*.

It is singular, that over *The School for Scandal* a mystery hangs not unlike that attached to *The Claudestine Marriage*, for it is asserted that the plan was taken from a manuscript which had been previously delivered at Drury Lane theatre by a young lady; and undoubtedly a rumour has ever prevailed that it was not thoroughly the work of Sheridan.\* I have heard, long ago, an old

\* Every one at all interested in dramatic history, has heard of the plagiarism imputed to Sheridan of *The School for Scandal*; and in some respects, there is no doubt of the fact, to a certain extent, of that plagiarism. An aged friend, who was familiar with the playhouses in his youth, has given the following account of the story:—"Very many years have elapsed since Sheridan's plagiarism was bruited, or rather, since it first came to my knowledge; but you shall have the particulars as distinctly as I can report them at this date. Mr. Sheridan was in habits of particular intimacy with the Richardson family. Miss Richardson, a very accomplished young lady, wrote a play, which Mr. Sheridan undertook to bring out forthwith at Drury Lane theatre. A season passed, but, to the great disappointment of the young lady, the play was not produced. When she protested, as she often did, against this delay, he adroitly shifted the subject, strenuously urging her to cultivate a talent in which she excelled, that of painting. Another season drew towards its close, when out came *The School for Scandal*. But a small progress had been made in the representation, when Miss R. fainted, and was taken from the pit of the theatre; so strong was the impression on her mind, that her own piece had been pillaged, and the materials worked up for the performance in question. It was told that she did not long survive this mortification."

"But farther, I was assured by a gentleman, John Oswald, who, among other literary engagements, reported at that time for *The Oracle*, that Mrs. Philips, the mother of the celebrated vocalist Mrs. Crouch, had in her possession the rough draft of Miss Richardson's comedy, which he had seen, and which, if his testimony is to be confided in, established the plagiarism beyond all doubt. I was also promised a sight of it, but somehow missed the occasion.

friend tell, that on the night on which it was first represented, the young lady was in the theatre, and was so moved when she saw in it so many of her own rejected scenes, that she became much agitated, and was obliged to be taken out of the theatre ; soon after which she fell into bad health and died.

In the mean time, King had been part proprietor and sole manager of the Bristol theatre, a property which he sold, and purchased three-fourths of Sadler's Wells ; but this he afterwards parted with, when he was invited to undertake the management of Drury Lane, in which situation he continued till 1788, when he visited Dublin and Edinburgh with distinguished success. Returning to London, I find that in 1789 he performed at Covent Garden, but he was soon after induced to resume his situation at Drury Lane. In the summer of 1792 he performed at the Haymarket ; and on the 24th of May 1802, he took his leave in the part of Sir Peter Teazle.

His performance on this trying occasion was distinguished for equal vigour and taste, and evinced by the powers he displayed, and the applause he received, that he had judiciously chosen that moment for his retreat, when pity was not likely to be felt at an exit that was to be for ever ; for in the Green-room as well as before the curtain, it was regarded with sentiments appropriate towards one who had so long contributed so much and so excellently to the cheerfulness of the public. The performers presented him with a silver cup and salver, as a testimony of their esteem for his character as a man and his merits as a comedian. He did not, however, very long enjoy the repose of his retirement ; for, on the 11th December 1805, he expired in his house in Store Street, Bedford Square, and was buried in St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

In private life he was amusing and respectable, replete with anecdotes, which he told with spirit and enlivened with mimicry. But he was subject to one great vice,—an unquenchable passion for gaming, the fluctuating results of which embarrassed his age and sharpened the anguish of his infirmities. Of his literary talent it is unnecessary to speak, as his two dramatic pieces are laid on the shelf, and have rested there for many years, destined, probably, for an interminable sleep.

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### THOMAS HOLCROFT.

THE volumes of biography afford few more affecting memoirs than the account which Holcroft has himself given of his youth ; it shows

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“ The song in *The Duenna*, beginning with

‘ In eyes that would not look on me ’  
I could never lustre see

was not written by Sheridan, but was taken without leave or licence, when his back was turned, from the *escritoire* of an intimate friend, the author of several pleasant dramatic pieces.”

at once a poor boy contending with all the calamities that beset miserable poverty, and of native genius struggling with difficulties. It may be that his talents and taste were not transcendent; but it is impossible to contemplate the ills, the hardships, and the privations of his early years, without regarding his career as wonderful in the annals of literature. Originally a beggar child in rags, afterwards a common Newmarket stable-boy, then a humble cobbler, he became an actor, and in the end a celebrated author, contributing to the theatrical enjoyments of a great nation in its refined capital, and of the most polished circles of a high aristocratic society.

This remarkable person was born in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, London, on the 10th of December, 1745, old style. The reminiscences of his childhood appear to consist of such incidents as are common in the humble circumstances of his birth; and the character of his father, restless and roving, seems to have been of all others the most likely to have bred his son for ignominy. But these defects were redeemed by an unchangeable integrity, a purity of heart which often, like the precious stone on the dunghill, adorns the meanest condition.

Holcroft's description of the dispositions of his early associates is pleasing to humanity, and must bespeak respect, even from the great for the simple annals of the poor.

A good-natured apprentice-boy who took him to school, and made him afterwards a present of the *History of Parismus and Parismenes*, with the Seven Champions of Christendom, claims largely on the sympathy of those who are blest with that discernment which discovers worth beneath tatters and deformity. "He was," says Holcroft, "an exceedingly hard-featured youth, with thick lips, wide mouth, a broad nose, and his face very much marked with the small-pox; but very kind and good-tempered. I perfectly remember his carrying me in my petticoats, consoling me as we went, and giving me something nice to eat." This, with his general character when he visited Holcroft's father in misfortune, ever with something kind to say, and good to give to the little boy, completes the outline of a character common in humble life, but seldom described.

Holcroft was a singularly precocious child; at five years old he learned to play on the violin, but his proficiency was blighted by a prideful remark of his uncle, who inquired with contempt of his father—"If he intended to make a fiddler of the boy!" The instrument was, in consequence, laid aside, and the art of playing was soon forgotten. But, nevertheless, Holcroft says, that to this period his infantine life had passed under more favourable circumstances than are common to the children of the poor. When he was about six years old the scene changed, hardships began, and sufferings increased.

It would seem that his father's affairs in their little sphere then became embarrassed. On a sudden he broke up his household, and went into Berkshire, about thirty miles from London. The house there was situated at the corner of the road, close to a small common. In this retired spot his father began to renew to his son the lessons he had received at school. In them, however, Holcroft made no

particular progress, till he thought of catching at once all the sounds he had been taught from the arrangement of the letters ; after which his progress became so rapid as to surprise his teacher. The description of the process is not, however, very clear, and the reader must exercise his ingenuity to comprehend it.

At that early period he showed not only talent, but a degree of courage and perseverance which would have distinguished a much older boy. When only little more than six years old, his father had occasion to go to London at a later hour than usual, and obtained, for expedition, the loan of a horse from a neighbour, on condition that it should be returned that evening. He then mounted and placed our hero behind him to take back the horse. How far he carried him, Holcroft could not recollect, but it was over Ascot Heath, where, about an hour before dark, he alighted, leaving the boy on horseback, and giving him directions for the way home.

Homeward the child proceeded, anxious to arrive before it was quite dark, but unluckily, soon after parting from his father, when no human being was in sight, the horse stumbled and threw off the rider's hat. To have lost his hat would have been a terrible misfortune, he therefore alighted to pick it up, but when he attempted to remount he found it impossible, all he could do was to drag the sluggish animal along, and to cry bitterly. Twilight was closing, and he was alone on the common. At length the white railing of Ascot Heath race-course came in sight ; with difficulty he drew the horse to the railing, on which he clambered and resealed himself in the saddle : an achievement of this kind was undoubtedly remarkable in so young a boy, but it was the forerunner of the address and spirit which he afterwards displayed as a groom at Newmarket. It would seem that both with alert discernment and animal courage he was particularly endowed ; but he confesses that he was, nevertheless, when a child, full of superstitions ; when magpies crossed, or did not cross his path, he deemed them ominous of good or ill luck ; and when he walked he often pored upon the ground for pins or nails, which, according as they lay, foreboded misfortune. He was not, however, tainted with the dread of spirits, nor aught of all the apparitional world revealed by ghosts and goblins.

When his father had resided about twelve months in Berkshire, he began that wandering life which threw his son into such jeopardy, and from which nothing but some indestructible principle could have preserved him.

His young remembrance recalled in after-life circumstances which convinced him he had been carried to London, where his parents grew very poor, and his mother was obliged to become a way-side pedlar ; with a basket on her arm of small haberdashery, pins, needles, and tape, and her little boy trotting at her heels, she tramped the villages to hawk her pedlary.

With her husband the mother and son went to Cambridge, and afterwards traversed the neighbouring villages. In one, remarkable for its neatness, the name of which is not mentioned, their destitution amounted to that calamitous degree, that Holcroft says himself, "Here it was that I was either encouraged or commanded one day to go

by myself from house to house and beg." In this humiliating condition his ingenuity and the various tales he told procured him much kindness ; but when he returned to his parents and recited the falsehoods he had invented, his father became greatly agitated and exclaimed to his wife, "This must not be ; the poor child will become a common-place liar, a hedge-side rogne ; he will learn to pilfer, turn a confirmed vagrant, go on the highway when he is older, and get hanged ! He shall never go on such errands again !"

This affecting scene is one of the many instances in which reality surpasses fiction. The whole range of the drama cannot parallel an incident so pathetic :—A wretched family is in a state of such extreme destitution as to be obliged to send their little boy to beg his bread from door to door. His natural sagacity teaches him that the charity of man is only to be obtained by sympathy ; and his talent, young as he is, enables him to gain compassion to so great a degree that he returns to his wretched parents at their place of rendezvous under the hedge, and exultingly displays the alms he has gathered. In relating how he had exerted his ingenuity, his father, though a wandering vagabond, has yet virtue enough to fear the consequences : at first he is pleased with the address of the child, he inquires his method, and one falsehood after another is repeated, the poor man is astonished, his agitation rises to horror as the child proceeds, and, forgetting their mutual abjectness, he prefers starvation, —for such is the effect of his resolution, —to a repetition of the risk ; but the heart of the reader must supply the comment.

The tear forgot as soon as shed is one of the boons of childhood ; whatever may have been his father's anguish, to himself the impression was but the shadow of a passing cloud, and the common incidents of boyish admiration were sufficient to banish, though they could not obliterate them from his mind. The heart of youth is smooth, and sorrow cannot lay hold of it long, but the breast of manhood has many cells where griefs and care nestle and abide.

Holcroft imagined that by a scene at Wisbeach fair his ardent love of the dramatic art was first excited,—the performance of a quack-doctor and his merry-andrew. And, really, when I reflect on the enjoyment I have had myself in such sights, yea, even unto this day, I sadden in contemplating the mirthless destiny of the rising generation. Alas ! fairs and shows, with all their pageantry, are rapidly dispersing, and that stern churl, Justice Reason, with Utility the constable, now rule in the boothless and deserted market-place.

The apparition of the doctor and his zany was, says Holcroft, "a pleasure so unexpected, so exquisite, so rich and rare, that I followed the merry-andrew and his drummer through the streets, gliding under arms and between legs, never long three yards apart from him ; almost bursting with laughter at his extreme comicality ; tracing the gridirons, punchinellos, and pantomime figures on his jacket ; wondering at the manner in which he twirled his hat in the air, and again caught it so dexterously on his head. My curiosity did not abate when he examined to see if there was not some little devil hid within it, with a grotesque squint of his eyes, twist of his nose, and the exclamation, 'Oh, ho ! have I

caught you, Mr. Imp?' making a snatch at the inside of his hat, grasping at something, opening his hand, finding nothing in it, and then crying with a stupid stare, "No, you see, good folks, the devil of any devil is here!" Then again, when he returned to the stage, followed by an eager crowd, and in an imperious tone was ordered by his master to mount, to see the comical jump he gave, alighting half upright, roaring with pretended pain, pressing his hip, declaring he had put out his collar-bone, crying to his master to come and cure it; receiving a kick, springing up and making a somerset;—thanking his master kindly for making him well, yet the moment his back was turned mocking him with wry faces; answering the doctor, whom I should have thought extremely witty, if Andrew had not been there, with jokes so apposite and whimsical as never failed to produce roars of laughter; all which was to me assuredly

‘The feast of reason and the flow of soul;’

as it was the first scene of the kind I had ever witnessed, so it was the most ecstatic."

It will readily be admitted that a life so little superior in comfort and pursuit to that of the common gypsies, was not favourable to the cultivation of literary predilections, or likely to afford much insight to the manners of the world; but, undoubtedly, with innate humour it was highly so to the acquisition of that grotesque and unabashed absurdity which makes up often much of the entertainment of the stage, where excess and extravagance are in their proper element. At the same time it must be allowed, when we consider the slender means which players in general possess of observing the details of society, that it is not probable their exhibitions of the manners peculiar to the different classes, are ever likely to be very accurate.

From the time that Holcroft began to travel the country with his father and mother, he had little leisure to acquire learning. He was too much oppressed by fatigue, hunger, cold, and nakedness; still, as often as any opportunity presented itself, though without aim or object, he indulged his inclination in reading, and once for the prize of a halfpenny he got the ballad of "Chevy Chace" by heart.

When about the age of eleven or twelve his hardships had brought on an asthma, at Nottingham, from which he long suffered severely, and while in that town he witnessed a public execution, which had such an effect on him that he never forgot the spectacle of the dying culprit. It seems, however, to have left no other impression on his memory than disgust and anguish, a circumstance which, perhaps, serves to show that his genius was not of a very high kind; for incidents that leave a strong impression on minds of that endowment, become to them often the germs and energies of striking and original conceptions.

His health, during the time he stayed with his father at Nottingham, improved, and during the races the question occurred to him whether it would not be possible to procure the place of a stable-boy at Newmarket. At this time, says he, "I was, in point of clothing, in a very mean, not to say ragged, condition. The stable-boys I saw

at Nottingham were healthy, clean, well fed, well clothed, and remarkable rather for their impudence than seeming to live under any kind of fear or hardship. Except their impudence, I liked every thing else I saw about them ; and concluded that, if I could obtain so high a situation as this, I should be very fortunate."

The result of these reflections led him to make the attempt, and he was, in the end, engaged. His own account of his occupations as a groom at Newmarket is exceedingly curious ; it may, perhaps, be less picturesque than the description of his younger years, but it is interesting, as affording a view of the manners and customs of a profession which can only exist in the most luxurious or barbarous state of society. It however belongs not to the nature of this work to relate his adventures among the race-horses, in which he describes himself as having been rather distinguished ; but, while he was a stableboy at Newmarket, a period of two years and a half, he taught himself to write, improved his reading, acquired singing and arithmetic, and his mind began to open to the virtues and duties of life. In consequence of observing how little his pursuits and amusements were calculated to promote either, he left Newmarket and joined his father in London, who at that time kept a cobbler's stall in South Audley Street.

He continued to work with his father for some time, and spent what leisure and savings he could afford in reading and in procuring books. When about nineteen he travelled to Liverpool with the old man, whose disposition to change his place continued unsubdued, and, in 1764, he married.

At Liverpool he undertook the superintendence of a school for children, but, in the course of the year, he returned to London, where he resumed his trade as a shoemaker, yet gleaned knowledge with all the industry in his power. It must, however, be admitted that he possessed some of his father's unsettled humour, for he hated his trade, and being attacked again with the asthma, he became anxious for another employments.

At this period his situation was, however, distressing ; except during the time he had been at Newmarket, he had felt constant poverty, but the effects now preyed upon his mind more than on his body. He ruminated on the advantages of a good education, and his inability to receive or to pay for instruction. But the materials which he had collected in his desultory course were destined to supply the defects that he so greatly bemoaned, and were even then working to an issue.

At this time he could not resist the inclination he felt to commit his thoughts to paper, and the editor of the *Whitehall Evening Post* so far approved of his essays as to pay him five shillings a column for them. These essays, crude as his education had been, must have possessed some obvious merit, for one of them was transcribed into the *Annual Register*. About this time he attempted to set up a little day-school somewhere in the country, but his effort was ineffectual ; all that depended on himself was meritoriously done, he lived frugally on the merest necessities, but obtained only one scholar, so he gave it up and returned to London.

He procured there a situation with Mr. Granville Sharp, and resided in his family as a servant and clerk. It would seem that his wife was now dead, for she is no longer mentioned. During the time he was in Mr. Sharp's family, he spent his leisure in a reading-room or at a spouting-club, the members of which rehearsed, in turn, passages from plays. This Mr. Sharp considered an idle waste of time, and, after several attempts to cure him of what he deemed a bad habit, he at length dismissed him.

He was now once more friendless in the streets of London, and formed the determination to enlist for India, when he was met by one of the persons whom he had known at the spouting-club, and disclosed to him the desperation of his circumstances. This acquaintance was a kind of scout employed by Macklin to pick up young adventurers of talent to go over to play at Dublin. By him he was conducted to the master of actors, whom they found seated on his couch by the fire-side, on which, whenever he felt himself drowsy, he went to rest both day and night, and, in consequence, was sometimes not in bed for a fortnight together. The scout and our hero were followed by Macklin's wife into the room, who brought him a basin of tea and some bread, with each of which he found fifty faults in the surliest manner. His countenance, as it appeared to Holcroft, was the most forbidding he had ever beheld, and age, which had muled his teeth, had not improved the expression of his mouth.

After desiring the young candidate for the favour of *Thespis* to sit down, he eyed him very narrowly for some time, and then asked him :—

“What has put it into your head to turn actor?”

After a short pause, Holcroft replied, “I suppose it is genius, but it is very possible I may be mistaken.”

“Yes,” exclaimed Macklin, “that's possible enough; and, Sir, you are not the first that I have known to be so mistaken;” and he smiled a ghastly grin at his own satire.

While Macklin was drinking his tea they talked on indifferent subjects, and he condescended to allow that Holcroft had the appearance of being an ingenuous young man. He then desired him to speak a speech out of some play, which being done, he remarked that he had never heard a young spouter speak naturally, and was not surprised that our hero did not, but, as he seemed tractable, if he would call again next day, he would answer him farther.

Holcroft and his friend then adjourned to the Black Lion, in Russell Street, then a house of call for the players. Here they learned that Foote was mustering a company for Edinburgh, and Macklin's manner not having won the heart of our hero, he resolved to apply to Foote. Accordingly, shaking off his companion, he hastened to the wit's house in Suffolk Street, and had the good fortune to find his amanuensis at breakfast.

“Well,” said Foote, “I guess your business, young gentleman, by the sheepishness of your manner; you have got the theatrical cacoethes; you have rubbed your shoulder against the scene; hey, is it not so?”



Holcroft acknowledged it was. "Well, and what great hero would you wish to personate? Hamlet, or Richard, or Othello, or who?"

Our adventurer replied that he distrusted his capacity for either.

"Indeed!" said Foote, "that's a wonderful sign of grace. I have been teased these many years by all the spouters in London, of which honourable fraternity I dare say you are a member; for I can perceive no stage varnish, none of your true strolling brass lacquer on your face."

"No, indeed, Sir."

"I thought so; well, Sir, I never saw a spouter before that did not want to surprise the town in Pierre or Lothario, or some character that demands all the address and every requisite of a master in the art. But come, give us here a touch of your quality; a speech.—here's a youngster," pointing to the amanuensis, "will roar Jaffier against Pierre."

Accordingly he held the book, and at it they blaired. For a little while Holcroft restrained his wrath, but at last they both roared so, that it would have done your heart good to have heard them.

Foote smiled at their vehemence, but his opinion was not discouraging, for he told Holcroft, that with respect to giving the meaning of the words, he was more correct than he had expected.

"But," said he, "like other novices, you seem to imagine that all excellence lies in the lungs; whereas such violent exertions should be used very sparingly, for, (besides that these two gentlemen, instead of straining their throats, are supposed to be in common conversation,) if any actor make no reserve of his powers, how is he to rise according to the tone of the passion?"

Holcroft afterwards displayed his musical talents, which Foote also approved, but as he was inexperienced in the business of the stage, told him his salary would at first be very low—not more than one pound per week.

Although these two interviews are amusing of their kind, and Foote appears to have treated him tolerably, it is impossible to repress a smile at the idea of persons who have never been in any situation to see good manners, undertaking to represent not only those of gentlemen, but even of Princes and Kings. Holcroft, however, was pleased with the interview, but, as he had promised, he called again on Macklin, who on his second visit gave him a part to read in a piece, of which he was himself the author.

When he had finished, he considered himself bound to be candid, and accordingly mentioned the offer he had from Foote, and finally it was agreed that Holcroft should have thirty shillings a-week to be prompter, and to act occasionally small parts. Upon this engagement he proceeded to Dublin, and having borrowed six guineas from Macklin, in anticipation of his salary, he rewarded his spouting friend with a guinea, redeemed his clothes in pawn, and left London elated.

About the end of September 1770, he reached Dublin, but he early took a prejudice against the country, and as the theatre did not open till November, his finances became exhausted. His situation again was desperate, and the wants of it were exasperated

by an antipathy which he cherished to the manager, who does not appear indeed to have been very conciliatory ; nor was Holcroft himself aware of his own deficiency, in what his biographer Hazlitt calls " the honeyed arts of adulation." He, however, endured what he conceived were the insults of malice and ignorance for five months, till the money he had borrowed on his salary was repaid, when the manager immediately discharged him. Thus was he again thrown back upon the hands of Providence ; nothing but misery and famine stood before his eyes : he was penniless, and he conceived himself to have been unworthily treated.

He then quitted Dublin and sailed for Parkgate, in March 1771. The passage was rough ; the packet was driven by the wind as far north as the Firth of Clyde, and they were seven days in the Channel, and almost starving, when they made the Isle of Man.

A dead calm succeeded to the storm, which the sailors, with their wonted superstition, attributed to a Jonas being on board. This fancy they inculcated on the poor Irish passengers, and Holcroft was the individual on whom their suspicions lighted, especially when they discovered he had been a player.

While they were in this state of mind he sauntered off the quarter-deck with a volume of *Hudibras* in his hand, and walking to the other end of the vessel found himself encircled by two or three fellows with the most ferocious looks, gazing at him with aversion. The peculiarity of their manner excited his notice, and one of them, quivering with passion, asked him if he had not better get a prayer-book than be reading plays upon that blessed day, adding, " You are the Jonas, and by *Jasus* the ship will never see land till you are tossed overboard, you and your plays along with you ; and sure it will be a great deal better that such a wicked wretch as you should go to the bottom, than that all the poor innocent souls in the ship should be lost."

This speech disconcerted him, but he still retained presence of mind enough to assure them that it was not a play-book he was reading, and opened it to convince them, as he sidled away to the quarter-deck. Without any other adventure he reached Chester.

At that city he wrote to several strolling companies offering his services, and he entered into an engagement with one that was then at Leeds. But his evil genius was still predominant ; the affairs of the company when he joined were in disorder, the actors were quarrelling with one another, and he discovered, to his humiliation, that though some of his new associates could scarcely read, they could, from habit, speak better on the stage than he could.

The bickerings of the players soon came to a head, and they gradually deserted the manager till he was obliged to dissolve the company. In the mean time Holcroft received a letter inviting him to join another set of actors then at Hereford ; but it had been written nearly a month before, and that city was a hundred and sixty miles off ; the state, however, of his finances was such that he was obliged to decide at once. Accordingly, with a heavy heart and a light purse, he began the journey. On the fifth day he entered an inn on the road-side, eight-and-twenty miles from Hereford, with

nine-pence in his pocket, and in the morning made his exit pennyless ; nevertheless he proceeded on and reached the town. Faint, weary, and ready to drop with hunger, he traversed the streets in quest of the manager, who was nowhere to be found. He was then directed to a barber, his brother, and upon the family observing his weakness, he told them his journey, and that for the day he had not broken his fast except at the brook : and yet they heard him without offering the least refreshment.

When the players understood that a fresh member was come to join them, their own experience taught them to discover his situation, and they were not a little incensed at the story of the barber ; for the want of kindness and generosity is not the vice of their profession.

The company into which Holcroft was introduced was that of the Kembles, and the father of Mrs. Siddons was the manager ; he continued with it some time, and went in their circuit to several places, acting, however, but inferior parts. An occurrence took place while he was with this party which richly deserves commemoration, not only for the beauty of the anecdote itself, but for a premature glimpse which Mrs. Siddons, then a child, afforded of her powers that yet lurked in the germ. A benefit had been fixed for some of the family, in which she was to perform some juvenile part. The taste of the audience rebelled at her extreme youth, the house was shaken with the uproar, and the child, disconcerted, was bashfully retiring, when her mother, alarmed, rushed forward, and leading her to the front of the stage, made her repeat the appropriate fable of the Boys and the Frogs, which completely appeased the clamour ; it was, indeed, apposite to the condition of the family at the time.

Some difference with old Kemble occasioned Holcroft to leave this company, from which he joined Stanton's and made excursions to the North of England. While with Stanton he married again, but though in the character of his wife there was much to have increased his happiness, it was embittered by distress and disappointment, and in what should have been his felicity there was only a doubling of his sorrow. In his extremity he applied to Garrick, but without success, and soon after his wife died. At the period of that event he was in Booth's company, which he had joined at Carlisle in the autumn of 1774.

Of his merits at this time, his own account, in his letter to Garrick, is thus ; " I have played in the country with applause, and my friends, I am afraid, have flattered me ; some of them have ranked me among the sons of genius, and I have at times been silly enough to believe them. I have succeeded best in low comedy and old men. I understand music very well ; something of French, and fencing, and have a very quick memory, as I can repeat any part under four lengths at six hours' notice. I have studied character, situation, dress, deliberation, enunciation, but, above all, the eye and the manner, and have so far succeeded, as to be entirely at the head of my profession here in all those characters which Nature has any way qualified me for." Indeed, the conditions of his engagement to

Booth almost justified this modest account of the qualifications which he deemed fit for the metropolis.

"He engaged," says Hazlitt, "to perform all the old men and principal low-comedy characters; he was to be the *music*, that is literally, the sole accompaniment to all songs on his fiddle in the orchestra; he undertook to instruct the younger performers in singing and music, and to write out the different casts or parts in every new comedy; and, lastly, he was to furnish the theatre with several new pieces never published, but which he brought with him in manuscript,—among the rest *Dr. Last in his Chariot*; and for all these services, various and important as they were, he was to receive a share and a half of the profits, which generally amounted to between four and five pounds a night, whenever the theatre was opened, that is, three times a week. This proposed salary could not, therefore, amount to more than seventeen or eighteen shillings weekly." To understand, however, what is meant by shares, I may here, in addition to what has already been stated, give Holcroft's account of this matter, important to all strolling-players.

"A company of travelling comedians is a small kingdom, of which the manager is the monarch. Their code of law seems to have existed, with few material variations, since the days of Shakspeare, who is with great reason the god of their idolatry. The person who is rich enough to furnish a wardrobe and scenes, commences manager, and has his privileges accordingly. If there are twenty persons in the company, for instance, the manager included, the receipts of the house, after all incidental expenses are deducted, are divided into four-and-twenty shares, four of which are called dead shares, and taken by the manager as payment for the use of his dresses and scenes; to these is added the share he is entitled to as a performer. Our manager (Stanton) had five sons and daughters, all ranked as performers, so that he sweeps eleven shares, nearly half the profits into his pocket every night."

Booth's establishment, to which Holcroft was attached, belonged originally to one Mills, a Scotchman, and the account of its origin is primitive in the extreme, and brings our imaginations back almost to the earliest eras of the drama. This Mills and his family originally commenced their strolling vocation, by playing nothing but Ramsay's delightful pastoral of *The Gentle Shepherd*, without scenery or music, which they continued to do for several years. As the younger branches of the family grew up, one of them became a scene-painter, and some of the others learned to play on the fiddle, and, in consequence, they then added scenes and music to their representations; afterwards, they enlarged their circuit and crossed the Borders, where they were not, however, so popular as on the other side of the Tweed. They, therefore, after the performance of *The Gentle Shepherd*, which was still the business of the evening, introduced a farce occasionally. Mills's daughters married players; this brought a great accession of ability to the domestic company, so that they were enabled to act regular plays, and by degrees Patie and Roger, with all the other inhabitants of the Pentland hills, were sent adrift. Still, however, during the lifetime of Mills, the whole business of

the theatre, even to the shifting of the scenes and the making up of the dresses, was carried on in the circle of his own family. At his death the properties were purchased by the landlord of an inn at Penrith, and it was by him let out to Booth.

Mrs. Inchbald was playing in this company at Inverness in 1773, from which they went to Glasgow, where, not being permitted to play, they were reduced to the utmost distress, but were liberated by a young Scotchman, who joined them in a frolic—the grandfather, I believe, of the late Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, member for Renfrewshire, at whose instigation they visited the aged town of Cartsdyke, to which Greenock is a modern suburb, and where Mr. Nicholson Stewart, the gentleman alluded to, enacted tragical parts with them.

Holcroft continued in Booth's company about a year and a half, and then joined Bates's. In the year 1777, Shield, the composer, was one of the band in the same company, and they walked together from Stockton-upon-Tees, Holcroft studying on the road Lowth's Grammar and reading Pope's Homer. At this time being eager to make himself acquainted with all the distinguished English poets, he was seldom without a volume of their works in his pocket.

At Stockton-upon-Tees he became acquainted with Ritson, the antiquary, at that time articled to an attorney in the town, but fonder of poetry than law.

His bias for literature was daily becoming stronger; he had never been satisfied with his employment as a strolling-player, but sighed for the literary advantages of London. In this, perhaps, he formed a correct judgment of himself, for he possessed no particular endowment from Nature to acquire celebrity on the stage. He was naturally long-backed, his grave voice disagreeably harsh, and his deportment unbendingly stiff. Considering, however, the extraordinary disadvantages which he had to contend with in early life, his career as a player ought to be criticised with indulgence, for it was but an expedient to obtain the means of subsistence. After wandering for seven years as a "poor player," he resolved to try his fortunes in London, where he arrived about the end of 1777.

On his arrival he was anxious to obtain an engagement with Sheridan at Drury Lane, but in vain; as a last desperate resource, when poverty again stood at his elbow, chattering her unvictualled teeth, he sat down and wrote a farce called *The Crisis, or Love and Famine*, which Mrs. Sheridan was prevailed on to read, and this, as he was able to sing in the chorusses, procured him an engagement at twenty shillings a week. His farce was, however, only played once; and his powers as an actor were in no esteem, till Sheridan saw him by chance in the part of Mungo, in *The Pudlock*, with which he was so much pleased that he added five shillings to his weekly salary.

During the summer recesses of 1778 and 1779, he made professional excursions to Canterbury, Portsmouth, and Nottingham, and in his range of parts in the country were higher, of course, than at Drury Lane; but poverty, the evil genius of his life, not only pursued him still, but brought her fellow fiend, Disease, along with her; for had not the state of his health required a change of air, he says that it

would have been more profitable to have remained in London, as by this time he had fairly commenced a literary progress. He had, moreover, his family in town, for, in coming to London, he had married a third wife.

But the grasp of poverty were still unslackened. In a little house-keeping speculation into which he was enticed soon after his marriage, by the advice of an upholsterer, he was completely ruined, and obliged to apply for assistance to several persons to prevent his furniture from being seized. His situation at this period had deep claims on sympathy; he had few friends in London. Shield and Perry, who died proprietor and editor of the *MORNING CHRONICLE*, whom he had known as a stroller with Booth's company in the North, were almost his only intimates, and neither of them were at the time, 1780, in circumstances to afford him much assistance.

At this period an incident occurred, during the trials at the Old Bailey of the rioters in Lord George Gordon's mob, which left an indelible effect on his mind. A young man was brought to the bar, the witness against whom swore that, as he was standing in a shop where he had taken refuge, he saw the prisoner coming down Holborn Hill, at the head of a body of rioters, flourishing a drawn sword. Holcroft, who was taking notes of the evidence, recollected the prisoner's face, and, when the evidence was over, he addressed the judge, and requested that he might be examined. Being admitted, he then declared that he had been present at the real transaction; that he was standing at the bottom of Holborn when the mob passed; that the prisoner was not among them, but that, some time after they were gone by, he had seen the prisoner, who was quietly walking along the street, pick up a sword and carry it away with him. This, said he, was the whole transaction, and the circumstances of his marching at the head of the rioters, and brandishing the weapon, are utterly false. The prisoner was, in consequence, acquitted.

In October 1781, Holcroft's first comedy, *Duplicity*, was acted. It was performed at Covent Garden, received with great applause, and he now considered his fame established; but when the piece was a second time played for the author's benefit, it did not clear the expenses of the house; Mr. Harris, however, the manager, gave him from the theatre one hundred pounds, and he sold the copyright to the booksellers.

The success of this comedy caused an important change in the views and condition of Holcroft, and, in other respects, the disasters which had hitherto chequered his life with so many sorrows, began to improve their influence. Sheridan had raised his salary to two pounds a week, but, as he did not facilitate his appearance in more considerable parts, Holcroft entertained some thoughts of going to Ireland; for he considered it not only inconsistent with his dignity, but with his interest, as an author, to appear only in the most insignificant parts on the stage.

The character of Holcroft, at this time, also underwent some change. The enduring patience with which he had suffered so much and the untired perseverance by which so many obstacles were overcome, were relaxed in their energy, and he entered into a speculative

copartnership with his old manager Booth, the object of which was the multiplication of pictures by the polygraphic art, but it ended in nothing.

It is not to be disguised, that although the talents of Holcroft were of no ordinary description, and that few men could lay an equally valid claim to the originality of being self-taught, he was yet not a genius of a very high order, and that perhaps his merits would have been less remarkable had his education been better : he had also about him undoubtedly quite as much pretension as talent, and this very absurd speculation with the polygraphic pictures was a striking example. In no part of his history does it appear that he had previously the slightest taste for painting, and yet in his thirty-sixth year he undertakes, on his own judgment, to supply the world with the most refined specimens of the art, and by an old mechanical contrivance, which his ignorance made him believe was new. His mind also, at this dawning of a brighter day, teemed with dramatic plots, characters, and incidents, and was full of the ambition to write elegant comedy, as if fate had not, both in natural taste and habit, denied the possibility.

Without question, his moral tact, though acute, was not delicate ; the forms and colours which make elegance he had not the faculty to be able to discover. He could see perhaps farther into the depths of the bosom than many men, but of those faint and delicate distinctions which belong to that quality of character he had no adequate perception. His sight was better than common, but he had not the painter's eye. His way of life was also still more unfavourable to the cultivation of that power of discrimination between inborn and artificial manners, in which the true talent for elegant description lies. He had not opportunities to discover the difference between conventional elegance and natural endowment. He could, undoubtedly, delineate the outline of characters, with considerable force, but there is no trace in all his manifold writings that he could very easily perceive the difference between the original mintage, and the polish produced by the collision of the other coins with which it circulated. But there was still a great deal of the most laudable emulation in his bosom, and a purity of domestic affection, that may be often equalled, but is seldom excelled. His attempt to obtain a secretaryship with the Ambassador to Paris, is characteristic of his inflated pretensions ; but the beauty of his constant love and regard for his father proves the simplicity of his heart, and would redeem greater blemishes.

Nor ought it to be passed over unnoticed, as a contrast to the principles which were developed in his life, that about this period he courted the condescension of the great with no particular dignity, nor seemed to be aware how little, either by mien or temper, he was likely to find favour in their eyes. Perhaps it was partly owing to his want of success in this humiliating pursuit that he afterwards became so acrid in democracy. The following sketch, which relates to the celebrated Duchess of Devonshire, affords a sample of the bitterness to which his fawning subjected his ill-directed ambition.

“ An actress who, strange to tell, happened very deservedly to be popular, and whom, before she arrived at the dignity of a London

theatre, I had known in the country, recommended me to a Duchess. To this Duchess I went day after day, and day after day was subjected for hours to the prying, unmannered insolence of her countless lacqueys. This time she was not stirring, though it was two o'clock in the afternoon ; the next she was engaged with an Italian vender of artificial flowers ; the day after the Prince, and the devil does not know who beside, were with her ; and so on, till patience and spleen were at daggers drawn. At last, from the hall I was introduced to the drawing-room, where I was half amazed to find myself. Could it be real ? Should I after all see a creature so elevated ; so unlike the poor compendium of flesh and blood with which I crawled upon the earth ? Why, it was to be hoped that I should. Still she did not come ; and I stood gazing at the objects around me, longer, perhaps, than I can now well guess. The carpet was so rich that I was afraid my shoes would disgrace it ; the chairs were so superb that I should insult them by sitting down ; the sofas swelled in such luxurious state, that for an author to breathe upon them would be contamination ! I made the daring experiment of pressing with a single finger upon the proud cushion, and the moment the pressure was removed it rose again with elastic arrogance ; an apt prototype of the dignity it was meant to sustain. Though alone I blushed at my own littleness. Two or three times the familiars of the mansion skipped and glided by me ; in at this door and out at that ; seeing yet not noticing me. It was well they did not ; I should have shrunk with dread of being mistaken for a thief, that had gained a furtive entrance, to load himself with some parcel of magnificence that to poverty appeared so tempting ! This time, however, I was not wholly disappointed : I had a sight of the Duchess, or rather a glimpse ! Her carriage was waiting. She had been so infinitely delayed by my Lord and my Lady, and his Highness and Signora !—was exceedingly sorry !” etc.

Could the mind which conceived this envious and grudging passage, have any just pretension to imagine that it ever could attain honour by attempting to describe that mingled gaiety courtesy, and sensibility, which constitute the essential ingredients of elegant comedy ? But to return.

Not succeeding in his hopes with the ambassador, Holcroft being still determined to visit the Continent, procured an engagement with *The Morning Herald*, to send over paragraphs, and with a bookseller, to furnish literary notices from Paris, an engagement far more suitable for his talents, acquirements, and condition. This mission he executed with ability and intelligence, but his evil fortune again lowered, and he was in consequence obliged to return to England, owing to the irregularity of the bookseller in making his remittances.

In 1784, his opera of *The Noble Peasant* was performed for the first time, and gave rise to a little interesting incident.

The evening it was acted Holcroft had placed himself behind the scenes, to watch the progress, and at the end of the first act the effect on the audience was discouraging, and disapprobation began to manifest itself so strongly, that he could no longer stand it. He left the theatre dejected, and went to St. James's Park, where he



walked for an hour. Having become more composed, he then returned, and was agreeably surprised to hear the house resounding with applause. The piece was not, however, very successful ; it ran on eleven nights.

His next opera, *The Cholerie Fathers*, was brought out at Covent Garden, but it was not esteemed equal in merit to the last.

Besides his dramatic efforts, Holcroft employed his pen in other departments of literature, and was concerned in *The Wit's Magazine* ; but about this time he declined his share, and resolved to devote himself to works of greater importance.

In 1784, *The Marriage of Figaro* came out at Paris with great success, so much so, that Holcroft resolved to go over to procure a copy, and adapt it to the English stage. The comedy had not been printed, and the jealousy of the French managers would not supply the manuscript ; in consequence Holcroft resolved to commit it to memory, and with a friend went every night for a week or ten days to the theatre, till they brought away the whole with perfect exactness—at night, when they got home, each of them wrote down as much as he could recollect, they then compared notes, and where they differed was corrected the following evening. When a copy was thus surreptitiously obtained, Holcroft hastened back to England, where arrangements were made with Harris for its speedy representation at Covent Garden. In a short time it was produced there, under the title of *The Follies of a Day*, and is still one of our popular entertainments. By this piece he received six hundred pounds from the theatre, besides disposing of the copyright.

In 1787 his comedy of *Seduction* was performed, and was received with great applause, and in 1789 he published his translation of *The King of Prussia's Works*, and also the translation of *Lavater's Essays*. For the former he received £1200.

Perhaps to having been engaged with the works of the Royal author, whom he did not much esteem, as well as the revolutionary spirit that he was then rising on the age, his political bias should be attributed. There is no doubt, that in the heart of the man himself a latent discontent—the spur of his ambition, lurked ; and these circumstances, probably, only served to sharpen it.

In 1790, *The German Hotel* appeared at Covent Garden, a lively piece, and sometimes interesting, but little more than a translation. In 1791 he brought out the comedy of *The School for Arrogance*, which as a literary work, is the best of all Holcroft's dramas. The subject was congenial to his temperament ; but the best scenes are overcharged and vulgar, and the refinement attempted in the character of the Count exhibits more of feminine petulance than the delicacy of a gentleman. His next play was *The Road to Ruin*, an extravagance put together with much skill and acumen ; but it largely partakes of the inherent fault of all Holcroft's dramatic compositions. The characters are caricatures, and the manners unlike those of the world. But, still, as an acting drama, it was one of the most popular ever performed, and brought the author nine hundred pounds from the theatre, and three or four hundred for the copyright. It seems, however, to have been indebted for this success more to a fashion, than to the merits

of the dialogue, and to the skill exhibited in the performance of one character, Goldfinch, for it is now almost laid aside.

The reputation and the circumstances of Holcroft were now thriving; the calamities of want and misery, which darkened his younger years, had now relented their persecution; but still he was an unfortunate man. In this year he lost his third wife, and in the preceding his eldest son, a clever and ingenious boy, but of a rambling disposition, who, on being intercepted it an attempt to sail for the West Indies, put a period to his existence. The circumstances of this catastrophe were truly deplorable, for it was in the very moment, when the father was searching for him in the vessel, on which he had taken his passage, that the deed was done.

In 1792 he published *Anna St. Ives*, a novel in seven volumes, which attracted considerable attention; but it is not greatly remarkable for originality, though some of the sentiments and notions savour strongly of the political dogmas which he now began to teach. I believe, however, that he was not aware of the danger he was doing to society, by undermining the reverence that is due to what age and custom has established. He was himself only a speculative politician, and would have spurned with horror the practice to which his precepts were calculated to lead. He was, in fact, one of those philanthropists who imagine that natural rights can be retained in the social state, and who think men should be regulated on a principle of equality; although Nature, by the variety of their endowments, whether of body or capacity, has so incontrovertibly pronounced them all different.

The first part of *Hugh Trevor*, another novel, appeared in 1794, and the remainder in 1797. It is something like a sequel to the former, but written with more common sense, and the style, which is throughout vigorous, sometimes rises to beauty; but it strongly partakes of that invidious feeling which I have noticed, both as inherent to himself, and engendered by the circumstances of his early life. It is, nevertheless, an amusing work; but the author does not indulge himself in good-humoured views of character. Vices that invest our common nature are too unjustly ascribed to rank; a Lord and a Bishop are the objects of his satire, and the faults of these individuals are displayed as the vices of their quality.

Hitherto the biography of Holcroft has afforded one of the most striking descriptions in literature—of talent combating fortune; and it is impossible to withhold sympathy, or repress admiration, at his struggles, and his courage, and his victories; but I doubt if the same compassionate interest can be expected for his subsequent career. He stepped aside from the sober path by which he had gained so much distinction, and, infected with the mania of the time, he deemed himself qualified to exalt the condition of humanity.

In November 1792 he became a member of the Society for Constitutional Information: but it is said he did not approve of all their proceedings; and he justly objected to the absurdity of their endeavours to decide what is true, by votes instead of reason; as if truth could be determined like practical questions which have undertakings for their object.

The heady current of affairs in France had alarmed the British Government, especially when they were so easily traced to doctrines that also agitated the public mind in this country ; coercive measures to repress the evil were in consequence determined upon. The society to which Holcroft belonged became an object of jealousy and persecution ; and being in a great measure merely speculative, its meetings were deserted. Yet a few members of resolute courage, conscious that there was no treason in their topics, still adhered, and among others, Holcroft. The panic before long evaporated which seized the Government, though it was exasperated by Reeves' Association ; but it is matter of history that those adherents were marked out as delinquents ; some of them were arrested for high treason, and ordered to be tried. Among this number, besides the arrested, Holcroft was included in the bill of indictment. Rumours of the intention of Government to proceed against him were circulated some days before, and occasioned him much disturbance of mind ; but as he had not been committed, he was beginning to disregard these reports, when he received the intelligence of being indicted. His friends advised him to fly, but he chose a manlier part, and determined on surrendering himself, which he did next day ; and as soon as the business of the court would permit, he thus addressed himself to the Lord Chief Justice.

"My Lord—being informed that a bill for high treason has been preferred against me, Thomas Holcroft, by his Majesty's Attorney General, and returned a true bill by a grand jury of these realms, I come to surrender myself to this court and my country, to be put upon my trial, that, if I am a guilty man, the whole extent of my guilt may become notorious ; and if innocent, the rectitude of my principles and conduct may be no less public. And I hope, my Lord, there is no appearance of vaunting, in assuring your Lordship, this court, and my country, that after the misfortune of having been suspected as an enemy to the peace and happiness of mankind, there is nothing on earth after which, as an individual, I more ardently aspire, than a full, fair, and public examination. I have farther to request, that your Lordship will inform me, if it be not the practice in these cases to assign counsel, and to suffer the accused to speak in his own defence ? Likewise, whether free egress and regress be not allowed to such persons, books, and papers, as the accused or his counsel shall deem necessary for justification."

Some conversation arose in the court as to his identity, which terminated in the Solicitor-General moving his committal ; he was accordingly taken into custody and sent to Newgate prison. In the course of a few days the solicitor for the Treasury, and two clerks, came to the prison and presented him with a copy of the indictment and a list of witnesses, together with a list of the jury, informing him, at the same time, that the Crown would grant as many subpoenas free of expense, as he should think proper to demand. The trials began on the following week, and the account which Holcroft himself has given is at once ridiculous, but so highly characteristic of his self importance, that, merely as a trait of vanity, it well merits to be quoted.

“Perhaps this country never witnessed a moment more portentous. The hearts and countenances of men seemed pregnant with doubt and terror. They waited in something like a stupor of amazement for the fearful sentence on which their deliverance or their destruction seemed to depend. Never surely, was the public mind more profoundly agitated. The whole power of Government was directed against Thomas Hardy ; \* in his fate seemed involved the fate of the nation, and the verdict of Not Guilty seemed to burst its bonds, and to have released it from inconceivable misery and ages of impending slavery. The acclamations of the Old Bailey reverberated from the farthest shores of Scotland, and a whole people felt the enthusiastic transports of recovered freedom.”

This theatric inflation sufficiently proves the general deficiency of common sense by which those innocent traitors were animated ; but Holcroft was punished for indulging in the dreams by which this was preceded, for, after having prepared his defence, which he expected would go down to all posterity as something wonderful, certainly equal to Paul's before Agrippa, he was not allowed to be heard. And it would be unfair not to notice a striking instance of the style in which he magnified himself on this occasion. The gentlemen who were placed at the bar with him, on being acquitted, bowed and retired, but Holcroft was determined to make a speech, and the Chief Justice was so indulgent as almost to consent to hear him ; he, however, claimed half-an-hour, and, in consequence, was ordered to withdraw.

There can be no doubt that Government, in this proceeding was actuated by an excitement produced by misrepresentation and that Holcroft, so far from encouraging any scheme of violence, did all in his small political capacity to direct the minds of the Constitutional Society to cultivate their intellects, which were certainly in a state of Nature. This was the head and front of his offending, and no more.

The persecution elevated him in his own opinion into mighty consequence, and, instead of showing himself possessed of the good taste which should have belonged to his innocence, he was instigated by a vulgar effrontery, to brave and defy the malice and the ignorance of his adversaries. In this he forgot that he had assumed the character of a philosopher, and took unwise pains to prove how much his skinless mind unfitted him to submit the resignation of a martyr, and to act with the resolution of a patriot.

These political turmoils being over, Holcroft resumed his literary labours, in which alone, as a public man, he was respectable. *Lovè's Fraillies* came out in the spring of 1794, at Covent Garden, and met with a cool reception, in consequence of being too highly seasoned with political allusions. In 1795, 1796, 1797, and 1798, he successively brought out different dramas, all partaking of his general merit, but *The Deserted Daughter* was received with the greatest applause. As I do not, however, undertake to criticise each of his works, it is unnecessary to be particular in recording their mere names. As contrivances, arranged with skill, his plots are often ingenious ; and as

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\* One of the alleged conspirators, a shoemaker.

congregated feelings, his characters have great merit, but they look not like things of flesh and blood. They have, it is true, individuality distinctly impressed upon them, too distinctly, but without those shades and delicate tints that mark the beings of life : they lack in personal features.

In 1799, Holcroft left England for Hamburg, but, before his departure, he married his fourth wife, and, it is said, the marriage was affectionate and happy. In private life he was, indeed, exemplary, and it was only in the distinction to which he was raised by political persecution that his conduct was not uniformly discreet ; self-estimation, probably, entered a little too largely into his transactions with others, but it was a blemish that chiefly affected himself and his own interests.

During the two last years he spent in England, before going abroad, he kept a diary, in which his own account of all his transactions are carefully recorded, and some of them with acumen ; but it shows that his mind was now deeply ingrained with politics, and that, while he conceived himself growing a greater public man, he was daily becoming less a wise one. But there are occasional touches and anecdotes of a better kind. One relating to a dispute between Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds is curious, as connected with a celebrated work of art.

“ Burke endeavoured to persuade Sir Joshua Reynolds to alter his picture of the Dying Cardinal, by taking away the Devil, which Burke said was an absurd and ridiculous incident, and a disgrace to the artist. Sir Joshua replied, “ That if Mr. Burke thought proper, he could argue as well as *per contra* ;” and Burke asked, “ If he supposed him so unprincipled as to speak from anything but conviction ?” “ No,” said Sir Joshua, “ but had you happened to take the other side, you could have spoken with equal force.” Burke again urged him to obliterate this blemish ; Sir Joshua had heard his arguments, and desired to know if he could answer them, replied, “ It was a thought he had conceived and executed to the satisfaction of himself and many others, and, having placed the Devil there, there he should remain.”

I have had occasion to notice already that Holcroft, at one time, was very assiduous in propitiating the favour of the great, and, not being successful, he evidently became morose against them, and the system of things which upheld them. In his diary there is a confession of his weakness.

“ I saw I was observed by General F—— ; we know each other personally, but are not acquainted ; acquaintance, indeed, among persons of rank, I have very few. My feelings will not suffer me to be forward ; and such persons are known only to the obtruding, or those who minister to their immediate pleasures and vices. Men of literature lay claim to honours to which men of rank have but seldom any good pretensions, and both seem jealous of their individual prerogatives.”

In the diary there are some little curious biographical anecdotes, and the following, respecting a very celebrated person, is particularly characteristic,

“Horne Tooke takes some pleasure in praising his daughters (they went under the name of the Misses Harts,) which he sometimes does by those equivocatory falsehoods which are one of his principal pleasures. Of the eldest, he says, ‘All the beer brewed in this house is of that young lady’s brewing.’ It would be equally true were he to say all the hogs killed in this house are of that lady’s killing, for they brew no beer. When a member of the Constitutional Society, I have frequently heard him utter sentences, the first part of which would have subjected him to death by the law but for the salvo that followed; and the more violent they were thus contrasted and equivocatory, the greater was his delight.”

Upon the whole, the gossip in his Diary is not particularly interesting, it is that of any common town man, but the reader who looks at it will be amused with what special attention he mentions every man of rank he met with, and scarcely one of his own station. Yet, notwithstanding this weakness, it certainly reflects credit both on his attainments and general behaviour that a person who began life in his circumstances, should by the force only of natural talent, have raised himself unpatronised to such respectability.

Soon after his arrival at Hamburg, he attempted to set up a literary journal, but it only reached the second number. Such an undertaking was beyond his powers, and whatever patronage the design might have met with, it was not likely to succeed by its own merits.

During his residence in Hamburg he resolved to abandon, and did so for some time, his picture-dealing; but he was tempted to renew the speculation, and, of course, lost money, and yet he believed himself no incompetent judge of the merits of paintings.

While in that city, he met with an alarming accident. He had been recommended to bathe his feet in hot water, and mix a certain quantity of aqua fortis in the bath; as he was pouring the medicine, the steam of the water caused the bottle to burst. The aqua fortis flew up to his face, and burned his wrists severely, but his spectacles preserved his sight; he was, however, some time recovering from the effects, but he bore his sufferings, as indeed all his misfortunes, with equanimity.

Having stayed upwards of a year at Hamburg, he proceeded to Paris, where he remained above two years, employed in collecting materials for his work on the Manners of the French Capital, published on his return in 1804; a most interesting and amusing book, but it is no longer referred to.

On his return from the Continent he embarked with a brother of his wife in the establishment of a printing-office; it proved, however, unsuccessful, and he had, about the same period, the mortification to incur the damnation of his drama of *The Vindictive Man*. At the same time his health, which had long been infirm, began to fail, and, on the 23rd of March 1809, at the age of sixty-three, he died. During the last six weeks of his illness he suffered much, but throughout he sustained himself with that vigour of resolution which he often exerted with so much fortitude in the calamities and trials of his early life.

His biographer has injudiciously applied to him the epithet of great ; undoubtedly, however, he was an able man in a department of literature, the drama, at once the most splendid and the most difficult. But, though meritorious and sometimes brilliantly successful, he is far short of the first rank. Still, such was the native energy by which he was actuated, that it prompted him often to undertakings to which his abilities and knowledge were not equal. He has however built for himself an eminent monument in the literature of his country ; insomuch that it will be rare to find, among the celebrated authors of England, a man who had to surmount so many obstacles, and in all acquitted himself so well.

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## GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

THIS great performer, for the vigour, the nature, and the austerity of his manner and talents, may be justly called the Tacitus of the stage. In his action there was, comparatively to his energy, but little grace ; his strength consisted in a peculiar straight forwardness—a strong Tuscan ability, which enabled him to sustain the greatest parts, and in which vastness of power was the predominant quality. He was born in Westminster, on Saturday the 17th April 1756. His father was a captain in the 4th Dragoons, and died while a young man, leaving his widow in straitened circumstances. Her name was Benton. Soon after the death of her husband, she went to reside at Berwick-upon-Tweed, where her son was put to school. What progress he made in learning has not been carefully recorded, but he was generally among the players regarded as a man who had been well educated, which, however, cannot be received, considering their common deficiency, as demonstrative of any superior acquirement.

The first play he ever read was *Venice Preserved*, and from a portrait of Woodward, as Mercutio, and the representation of a puppet-show, he formed his earliest crude and nebulous idea of a theatrical stage. The first drama he saw acted was *The Provoked Husband*, by the Edinburgh comedians, in the Town-hall of the borough. James Aicken, of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, was the Lord Townley of the evening ; his memoir does not, however, preserve the name of the Lady Townley, but all was wonderful and elegant, and made an indelible impression.

At this period, his mother was dead, and he lived with her sisters ; and as playbooks made no part of their library, he borrowed them from every quarter, and his attachment to the histrionic profession,

“ Grew with his growth, and strengthen'd with his strength.”

In April 1769, another detachment of the Edinburgh company shed life and glory in the Town-hall—and the school-boys imitated their heroics, by forming a company, of which Cooke was a member.

Their theatre was a barn ; their stage the floor ; their scenery mats and coloured paper, and their wardrobe a beggarly combination of borrowed garbs and discarded finery. Female characters were entirely omitted, except when *Hamlet* was brought out. On that occasion, the Queen was retained, and performed by a boy. Our hero's first appearance among them was as Young Meadows, in the opera of *Love in a Village*, in which he sang two of the songs ; but his chief part was Horatio in *Hamlet*, in which, though he was far from being esteemed at the head of the company, some of the Edinburgh players commended his exertions.

Boyish predilections are not, however, always to be regarded as indicative of talent, and although some of Cooke's juvenile adventures strongly marked the bias of his mind to the stage, and gave rise to laughable occurrences, it may be safely said, that the abilities he afterwards displayed were not decidedly apparent in his youth, however strong and constant his inclination may have been.

During the time that the Edinburgh players were in Berwick, the school-boys were alert to escape the vigilance of the door-keepers. On one occasion, Cooke obtained a clandestine entrance, and when behind the scenes espied a barrel, which seemed to afford him a snug hiding place. Into it he instantly leaped for concealment, and discovered in the bottom two twenty-four pound cannon-balls, but not yet being initiated into the mysteries of the theatre, he wondered what the balls were doing there, little suspecting that they assisted in making thunder, as well as Cyclops, or cannon. The play was *Macbeth*, and to give due effect to the entrance of the witches, the thunder was wanted for the first scene. The property-man approached and seized the cask, to cover the open end of which he fastened a piece of old carpet. Our hero remained crouched and silent, but the machine was lifted carefully by the property-man, and carried to the side-scene lest the thunder should roll before its cue, swearing, however, that the cannon-balls were cursedly heavy. The witches entered amidst lightning of rosin—the thunder bell rang, our hero sweated—the barrel received its impetus, and his iron companions rolled and rattled. It entered on the stage, and Cooke bursting off the carpet-head of the barrel, appeared before the audience with his head out, just as the witches agreed to meet again,

“ When the hurly-burly's done.”

It was about the time when this affair took place that our hero was bound as an apprentice to a printer, but this measure, conceived in kindness, and intended to moderate his excess of passion, only made him more impassioned in his love of the stage, and to infect his associates. In fact, the mania had deeply touched all his shopmen, and nothing would serve them but a secret exhibition, to the annoyance and just displeasure of their master.

Early in the year 1770 a band of strollers came to Berwick. They converted an old malt-house into a theatre, and opened their elegant performances with *The Provoked Husband*. At this place Cooke saw *The Earl of Essex*, *Oroonoko*, and several other pieces. In the autumn of the same year some of the young men of the town associ-



ated to perform the tragedy of *Cato*. Lucius was enacted by Cooke, and was happily achieved on the 5th of November, 1770.

Whether our hero had improved, or his master considered his cure to sobriety hopeless, certain it is that George Frederick did not long remain with the printers; his indentures were cancelled in 1771, and he immediately set off for London. In the month of November following he went to Holland, but for what purpose is not recorded; and in the year after he returned to Berwick, still more, if possible, addicted to the reading of plays.

In 1773 another strolling company came to Berwick, and Cooke learnt from them sundry lessons, no doubt brave ones, of *Lear*, *Richard*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, &c.; and again in the year following he went to London, where he witnessed with enthusiastic delight the greatest masters of that time of the sock and buskin. He saw Sam Foote, of celebrity in his way—the most impudent of mankind, and though renowned upon the town, a person of little reputation among the judicious.

The winter campaign at Covent Garden was opened with Murphy's tragedy of *The Grecian Daughter*, a piece of rant which Mrs. Siddons dignified. During this season Cooke first saw Garrick. His character was Leon, in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of *Rule a Wife, and have a Wife*. It is of some importance to notice, that soon after this period Cooke saw Macklin perform both Sir Archy Macsarcasm and Shylock, and probably derived from the performance, hints for that admirable truth with which he afterwards represented those parts himself.

He, however, did not make his regular débüt until the spring of 1776, and not then in London, but in the sober town of Brentford, where, in the character of Dumont, in the tragedy of *Jane Shore*, he first came forth "to fret and strut his hour upon the stage." "We dressed," says he, "in one room; it was at the audience-end of the house, and we had to pass through the pit to reach the stage, which was no higher than the floor, for the theatre was only a large room in a public-house." What success he gained on this occasion is not mentioned, but on the following night, as Ensign Dudley in *The West Indian*, his applause was wonderful for Brentford.

In the summer of 1777, having now attained the legal age of manhood, and fairly adopted his profession, he visited Edinburgh and Berwick, and thence, being freed from restraint, he made a rapid transit to Hastings, in the south of England. From thence, having tired both natives and strangers, the players went off in a body to Rye, and enacted in that distinguished town, all sorts of dramas in an old school-house. In the spring of 1778, he made his first appearance as an actor in London, but he then attracted no admiration.

Between the time of his first acting in London and the autumn of 1779, Cooke played in various characters at the Haymarket theatre, and at that time ran the customary round of Thespian itinerancy, a growing favourite. It has been said, that it was during this time he acquired those habits as a man, which afterwards maimed his skill and ability as an actor.

In September 1779, he became a member of a strolling company at Sudbury in Suffolk, but from that period he is lost sight of, and from 1781 to 1783 his life affords no adventures worth recording but the dull routine of alternate starvation and fun, the essentials of a stroller's biography. During this interval he was, however, occasionally in the metropolis, and had several opportunities of studying Henderson, after which he made an engagement with the company at Manchester, which he ever considered an important epoch in his life, but the wherefore is not very obvious. He, however, made his first appearance there on the 2nd of January 1784, as Philotas, in *The Grecian Daughter*, and was received with much applause: the part, however, is not calculated to make a deep impression; indeed, the whole play is feeble, and affords no character adequate to elicit fire such as that of Cooke.

About the beginning of June the Manchester theatre was closed, and in the middle of the month our hero went to Lancaster, where he formed an engagement for the summer. From Lancaster the company went to Preston, where he made an engagement for Liverpool and Manchester, and in September he played for the first time in Liverpool; the part was Frankly, in *The Suspicious Husband*. In December the company removed to Manchester, and on the 5th of February he left his situation for three months, on account of Moss, to whom the part of Sir Peter Teazle, which Cooke had played at Liverpool with éclat, was, he thought, improperly given.

It is necessary, perhaps, to observe here, that although our hero describes Moss as "a doubtful actor," it is extremely probable that in this part he was superior. I knew him well myself, and, in caricature parts, I have not yet, with the exception of Liston, seen his equal. From being a general player, and in all parts rather above mediocrity, his true particular merits were never justly appreciated; he was properly a farce actor, and in the grotesque characters of O'Keeffe his ability was irresistibly laughable. In Sir Peter Teazle he perhaps, a little overstepped the modesty of Nature, but it was on the right side. His Lingo was a master-piece; no player, for the last six-and-twenty years on the London stage, could surpass it.

In June following Cooke again returned to Lancaster, and was esteemed at the time a rising man in his profession; his salary was, however, only two guineas a week, but it was the highest in that company. At this period he had a given time for study, not unusually long; he was, however, occasionally afflicted with those fits of inebriety which accompanied him through life, and so often seduced him from his duty.

On the 29th of July 1786, he made his first appearance at York as Count Baldwin, in *Isabella*; and the same night was rendered remarkable by Mrs. Siddons performing there after her great success in London. From York the company went with her to Hull. In September Cooke was engaged to act with Mrs. Siddons at Chester, a decisive proof that his merits were growing with the public, for she was then in the morning of her glory, and the selection of him must have been made with reference to her splendour.

In January 1788 our hero acted for the first time at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in the character of Othello his merits were justly appreciated ; at his benefit he came out as Richard the Third, with increasing reputation. He then returned to Manchester. It was soon after his arrival there that the scene took place which Riley has happily described in his "Itinerant," and which cannot be omitted here, it is so illustrative both of the actor and the man.

One evening they were in the bar of a public-house, amongst a promiscuous company, when, Cooke evidently yielding to his habitual failing, Riley became anxious to get him home while he was in good-humour. Perhaps, pressing a little too eagerly, he roused the lion, and Cooke exclaimed, eyeing him with scorn, "I see what you are about, you hypocritical scoundrel, you canting Methodist thief! Am I, George Frederick Cooke, to be controlled by such a would-be Puritan as you? I'll teach you to dictate to a tragedian!" Then, pulling off his coat and holding up his fist, he exclaimed, in a menacing attitude, "Come out, thou prince of deceivers! though thou hast faith to remove mountains, thou shalt not remove me!—Come out, I say!"

There was a large fire in the grate, before which stood, with his skirts under each arm, a pitiful imitation of a kind of beaux then in fashion, deficient in cleanliness, shabby in costume, and, of course, insensible to propriety, and he wore a faded hat with a narrow brim, conceitedly placed on the side of his head. This filthy fop straddled, like the Colossus of Rhodes, before the fire. At length he caught the eye of Cooke, who, in silent amazement, examined him from top to toe, and turning to Riley, burst into a loud laugh, and cried, "Beau Nasty!" and immediately rising and taking up the skirts of his coat, in imitation of the other, turned like him, too, his back to the fire, and then approaching said in an affected whisper, but loud enough to be heard,—

"Pray, Sir, how is soap?"

"Soap?"

"Yes, Sir, soap; I understand it is coming down."

"I'm glad of it, Sir."

"Indeed, Sir, you have cause, if one may judge from your appearance."

At this there was a general laugh: the stranger, however, affected not to observe it, but hitting his boots with a flourishing air rung the bell, and inquired if he could have "a weal killet, or a mutton chip."

"What do you think," said Cooke, "of a roasted puppy? because," taking up the poker, "I'll spit you and roast you in a minute."

The dirty beau retreated towards the door, and Cooke, following, cried out, in the attitude of Macbeth,—

"Avaunt, and quit my sight! thy face is dirty and, and thy hands unwashed; avaunt, avaunt, I say!"—then, replacing the poker, he added, and returning to his seat, "Being gone, I am a man again."

It happened that a noted boxer made one of the company, a remarkably strong man, modest and good-natured. This scene had such an effect upon him that he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter,

which drew the actor's attention, and turning with his bitterest look, Cooke addressed him in the most contemptuous manner. The pugilist, knowing his peculiarities, bore his contemptuous epithets as long as possible, until they became so gross as to be no longer endurable, when calmly taking him in his arms, as though he had been a child, he set him down in the street, and bolted the door. Our hero entreated at the window, the night being wet, for admission, in vain; and being unheeded, he broke several panes, and inserting his head through the fracture said, "Gentlemen, I have taken some pains to gain admittance;—pray let me in, I see through my error."

Scenes of this kind were common in the nights of our hero. Once at Glasgow, Rock of Edinburgh, had occasion to make an apology for Cooke's being unable to act, and it was to a tragic tone, suiting the action to the word,—“Ladies and Gentleman, Mr. Cooke, I am grieved to say has been taken with a *bowl* complaint.”\*

At the Newcastle assizes, in 1789, Cooke performed with the celebrated Mrs. Jordan, and, in the same year, he also played with the famous Lord Ogleby, King, pursuing his profession with credit to himself, notwithstanding occasional interruptions arising from his unfortunate excesses.

In 1791 he was a member of a strolling company at Buxton, and afterwards he returned to Manchester, thence to Liverpool, where he found himself the brightest, though, in the opinion of the audience, the dimmest star in a London constellation. It was at this time he played Lear for his own benefit; but for the part, however judicious his conception, his physical powers were of too physical a texture.

The year 1793 passed with him much in the same way as those immediately preceding. In July 1794 he was at Buxton, where he commenced a journal, in which he has noted the books he then read, and in which there is a character of Dr. Johnson, drawn with force and discrimination.

“Upon considering Dr. Johnson's life,” says he, “which seems very accurately delineated by Boswell, I do not find the doctor that amiable, nor sometimes that respectable character I expected or wished. He is drawn overbearing, arrogant, extremely vain of his literary abilities, and forgetting all decorum when the company he happened to be in did not pay him that implicit attention and obedience he thought, even from men of equal or superior learning, he had a right to demand. Harsh and rude to women, and affecting to depreciate the literary merits of others, constituting himself sole judge of literary differences.”

This journal contains an account also of his transactions at Buxton, but it is not remarkable for any other quotable passage, except, it may be, one concerning America, in which he discriminates, with considerable fairness, the character of General Washington, as compared with the patriots of Paris at that time, and another which remembering his own infirmity, cannot be perused without sympathy.

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\* *Bowl*—meaning punch-bowl.

"Drunkenness," says he, "is the next leveller to death ; with this difference, that the former is always attended with shame and reproach, while the latter being the certain lot of mortality, produces sympathy, and may be attended with honour."

Early in November 1794, he embarked at Holyhead for Dublin, and, from his arrival, he dates a new era in his life. He was then thirty-eight years of age, and was still only a provincial player, but he now took possession of the Dublin stage without a rival.

His first appearance was in the part of Othello. "The Dublin theatre was then," he says, "at a low ebb ; the performers ill paid ; and the houses, scenes, and dresses, very mean and bad." But his unfortunate habit, more than the circumstances of the theatre, forced him to retire for a while from the stage, and to commit many pranks, which ultimately brought him to such a state of degradation that, either in shame or in drunkenness, he enlisted in a regiment destined for the West Indies.

One evil is generally the forerunner of another—sickness prevented him from embarking, and he was in England, 1796, as a soldier, dissatisfied with himself and his military profession. From this state he was relieved, on making his situation known to his old friends, the managers of the Manchester theatre, who procured his discharge, and subsequently engaged him ; but, before he joined their party, his excesses involved him in many disgraceful troubles.

In the course of the same year, 1796, he married a Miss Daniels, of the Chester theatre, at the time he was professionally in that city.

After his marriage he went to Dublin, where he played Iago, which was ever after one of his greatest parts. Subsequent to the rebellion in 1798, Cooke again played in Dublin, and, I believe, it was under this engagement that he first performed there with Kemble. An anecdote of the two, when they acted together there, is so characteristic of both, that it ought to be studiously preserved in their biography.

Our hero was waiting at the side-scene for his cue to go on, when Kemble came up to him.

"Mr. Cooke," said he, "you distressed me exceedingly in my last scene ; I could scarcely get on ; you did not give me the cue more than once ; you were very imperfect."

"Sir, I was perfect."

"Excuse me, Sir, you were not."

"By G—I was, Sir,"

"You were not, Sir."

"I'll tell you what, I'll not have your faults fathered upon me ; and d—n me, black Jack, if I don't make you tremble in your pumps one of these days, yet."

It is evident, from this little scene, that Cooke was conscious that he possessed the power to rival Kemble, and that he, even after having been so long on the boards of the provinces, was looking forward to an appearance in London. It was about this time that Mrs. Cooke left him.

From Dublin he went to Cork, and thence with the company to Limerick ; and, in December 1799, he was in Dublin, but his fame

was, in the mean time, filling a larger space in the world. On the 14th of February 1800, he received a letter from Mr. Lewis of Covent Garden, telling him there would be an opening for him next year if he wished it ; and, in the June following, he entered into an engagement with Mr. Harris, the manager of that theatre ; and on Sunday, the 26th of October, near midnight, he reached the metropolis. On the 31st of the same month he came forth in the character of Richard the Third, and established his fame : “ never,” he has said himself, “ was a reception more flattering, nor ever did I receive more encouraging, indulgent, and warm approbation than on that night, both through the play, and at the conclusion. Mr. Kemble did me the honour of making one of the audience.”

He was, at this time, in the forty-fifth year of his age, but he was still, notwithstanding his occasional excesses, in the full possession of all his faculties ; and it appears that he could only be regarded as having attained the full possession of them ; for they were slow in their development ; and, notwithstanding his intense passion for the stage, it could not be justly said that he was much sooner refined for the taste of London.

His second character was Shylock ; his third Sir Archy Macsarcasm ; his fourth was Iago, in which, it has been thought by good judges, he had no competitor, but many also imagined that he showed his hypocrisy so openly that it was wonderful how Othello could have been deceived by him. After Iago he attempted Macbeth, but, though he was allowed to be great, it was not esteemed one of his happiest characters. I shall not follow him, however, in all his parts ; it is enough to say they were the principal in the dramas of the time, in each of which he was never wanting in power, and often produced the most stupendous effects, both as to nature and skill. On the 27th January 1801, he took his first benefit, and, with a liberality not often imitated since, and always rare, it was given thus early and free of expense, in consideration of the impression which his performance has made on the town.

Cooke was now at the top of his profession ; he could hope to ascend no higher ; and for a time his career was similar to that of the most distinguished performers. The great towns in which he had formerly performed, not indeed unheeded, became eager to see him, as if the appearance on the London stage had added some new faculty, or was aught more than a test. But in this respect he had nothing to complain. It is the way of the world ; for although the talents of an author or artist receive no addition from success, yet success itself often depends on accident. A man, who is of weight in his circle, will often accomplish more for a candidate for fame than all the candidate's own endeavours, and sometimes even where he has less merit than in those things which have been neglected. Such is the spell of power, that waits upon patronage, and leads public opinion ; the deficiency will be overlooked and only the amiable and beautiful become the subjects of descant.

What added, perhaps, to the happiness of our hero at this time, when, “ with all his blushing honours thick upon him,” he returned to his country acquaintance, after his triumphant ovation on the London

stage, was the dissolution of his marriage with Miss Daniels. There was something never very clearly explicable in his connection with that lady. Their marriage may have been like that of the beggars, which was for a six weeks ; certain, however, it is, that it was duly put an end to, not by death, but by the Right Honourable Sir William Scott, as announced in the public prints of the time, viz., "On the fourth of July instant, a cause respecting the validity of the marriage of Mr. George Cooke, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, and Miss Alicia Daniels, of the Theatre Royal Bath, came on to be heard in Doctors' Commons, before the Right Honourable Sir Wm. Scott, when the learned Judge pronounced the marriage null and void." It is, however, worthy of remark, that the playhouse of Bath is called a Theatre Royal, and that no reason is assigned for the dissolution : Cooke himself was not a man likely to have put into the newspapers a sentence of this kind, and we know nothing of the lady and as little of her kin.

It would be to repeat a subject which has been already exhausted, to tell how he was received in the country after his metropolitan test. Before, he was considered an able performer ; he had now, at least, in some points, no rival, and Edinburgh, with its usual loquacity, was garrulous of applause. His American biographer speaks of the Scotch critics as the best judges of the dialect he made use of in *Sir Archy* and *Sir Pertinax* ; he meant accent, for Macklin's Scotch was worse than detestable—it was odious.

From Edinburgh, Cooke went to the muslin-manufacturing city of Glasgow, of which his praise is sweet and precious ; "Where," says he, "I finished my number of nights, and quitted Scotland, very sensible of the favours with which I had been received :"—a memorandum which gives us good reason to think that it was on this occasion he suffered, as we have already said, from the *bowl* complaint—(the punch-bowl).

It is but justice to Manchester to say, that he was received as one coming there with "brows bound with victorious wreaths." It had ever been a place in which he had been received with kindness. He liked the inhabitants for their hospitality. Though he clambered the steep of fortune elsewhere with hard labour and with difficulty, there he was always regarded with distinction, and before his talents had received the mintage of London, the value of the bullion was justly appreciated.

From Manchester he went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and played or drank there more than he should have done, for he did not appear in London in time, and a month of his life is unaccounted for.

After his appearance, and acting some of his greatest parts, he was brought out in 1802 in Orsino in *Alfonso*, in which his admirers were divided : some of them thought, that by bringing him in a new part and a new play, his attractions were failing ; but if we consider managers as men, the affair admits of another explanation. His attractions may not have failed, but his novelty was wearing off among those who were not regular playgoers ; and it is probable, as tragedies are generally expensive treats, that the managers rested on the sterling influence of his ability to secure success.

On the 24th February, he had his second benefit in London, but the proceeds to himself, though it was also clear, were less than his first. It produced to him £409 13s. 6d. Subsequently he entered into an engagement with Mr. Harris, for three years, which, after the third year of his first article, was at a salary of fourteen guineas a-week.

The career and course of Cooke, making due allowance for his personal peculiarities, was little different from that of other eminent performers. He was now a decided favourite with the national, as well as the London public, and his endeavours were uniformly crowned with approbation; although it must be confessed, that he received instances of popular punishment, in consequence of a neglect generally ascribed to his early and irrepressible inclination for the bottle.

It appears that he at various times kept his journal with considerable care; but it contains little that is interesting to the general reader, however much it may have been to himself; and the fact must not be disguised that though often a brilliant companion, he was often shunned; his sobriety could not always be counted upon, and when he had taken too much wine, he was obstreperous, and could not be easily guided. On the stage he was wonderful; in the parlour doubtful, and sometimes dangerous. His company was in consequence not much sought for, and on the stage alone it was allowed that he was most desirable.

On the 11th of May 1802, he first disappointed the London audience, by one of those unfortunate relapses of his early habit, now become inveterate, to which we have so often alluded. The play was *Alfonso*, in which he had undertaken the part of Orsino, and it was a benefit-night. He came upon the stage, attempted to perform, was hissed, and ultimately obliged to retire. The event was long obviously inevitable; for although from his first appearance, he had, under the influence of resolution, seconded by emulation, preserved the good opinion of the public, the devil was still in possession of the stronghold, and the only wonder was that Cooke had so long withstood the tempter.

On the 3rd of June he was in a condition to resume his professional exertions, but he had now passed the hill-top of his hopes and endeavours. He had no higher height to ascend—his descent was rapid, and on the other side, but marked rather by the adventures and follies of occasional convivial indulgence, than by those chances that constitute the better and more interesting part of biography. It is, however, from no lack of materials that I in this manner, perhaps too slightly, regard my subject, for the circumstances of no actor's life have been so well preserved as those of Cooke's from his appearance on the London stage. To these remarks I regret to add a painful fact.

On the 20th of April 1803, Cooke took his benefit in London. There is, however, no reason to believe that it was like the other two, free, nor that the proceeds from the public were so liberal even as the last—a proof that his estimation was fading.

In September he returned from his summer excursions and re-



sumed his place at Covent Garden, where Kemble having become a proprietor, he found him there with his superb sister, Mrs. Siddons. It might have been supposed that the population of London would have crowded the house to see Shakespeare illustrated by the acting of such a trio, but it did not take place. It even was ordained for the boy Betty to eclipse all their influence and splendour for a season.

The first appearance of Kemble and Cooke on the stage together was on the 3rd of October, when the latter played Gloucester to the Richmond of the former. They both employed their best energies, and were justly rewarded by the plaudits bestowed by the audience. But it must not be omitted that Kemble, in taking the inferior part, evinced, perhaps, as good a knowledge of the world as a consciousness of ability, for by so doing he augmented the respect previously entertained for his character. Three days after, *Douglas* was performed, in which Kemble again took the subordinate part of Old Norval. Cooke was the Glenalvon of the night, and Mrs. Siddons the Lady Randolph. In this way the performances of the season were conducted. The habiliments were of the most gorgeous description, the scenery could not be surpassed, and the propriety of all the incidental decoration nearly perfect, but, notwithstanding, it was not a profitable season. Cooke's benefit for the spring of 1804 was so near a disappointment that he never took another in London, and his career in private life was become low, offensive, and violent. On the stage he was several times hissed for incapable intoxication, and Kemble, by his circumspect behaviour, augmented his superiority.

In the meantime, the whole host of the theatre were destined to receive a severe humiliation in the appearance of Master Betty, who was now gradually becoming the idol of the hour. It cannot be disputed that the boy was followed by the fashion more than in consequence of any just discrimination of his merits, and that, although it must be conceded to the mortified actors that he was not such a prodigy as his worshippers proclaimed him, he yet served to show the world that, although endowment sometimes raised the player's to an intellectual art, it was in truth but a tyro's study, and required in most cases but the vulgar preparation of mechanical discipline.

In 1805, Cooke was in all respects, both as a man and a player, as he had been in the preceding year, but his deplorable avidity was becoming stronger and stronger.

The year 1806 was such another as the last.

Cooke does not appear to have been re-engaged at the opening season for 1807. It was commonly supposed that he had gone abroad, but the improvident man had incurred debts, and was either in hiding or in prison. About the end of the year he was set at liberty at Appleby, and little more can be said of him, than that while in confinement there, he had kept a journal, if such it may be called, which consisted only of recollections and short notes on the books he then read. From Appleby prison he was liberated by Rock, connected with the theatres of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and made an engagement with him, under which he acted with regularity from

December to July. In these professional engagements there is nothing interesting; they were each like another. A player's life, when well conducted, affords a few incidents to biography as that of any ordinary man of business; adventure is seldom on the stretch, or eccentricity on the wing saved difficulty.

In 1808 Cooke married again, which is the only event affecting the fortunes of the man, which may have been said to have taken place in this year, not distinguished by any uncommon occurrence.

In 1809 a cabal, it cannot be called a conspiracy, undoubtedly existed against Cooke among the admirers of John Kemble. Undoubtedly that person was, in private life, both agreeable and respectable, but it cannot be disputed that he had something of the pedant about him, and that the approbation which awaited him on the stage, was not entirely a tribute to professional excellence. His unblemished honour as a gentleman did much for him, and although it was suspected that he lent his countenance to the detractions of Cooke, every one who knew him in private must have scouted the imputation as a calumny. Indeed, the malice of Cooke's enemies stood not in need of any such encouragement. The admirers of Kemble required nothing more than Cooke's own imprudence to justify their preference. But malignity goes always farther than for its own base purposes it need do; a mysterious corrective provided by Nature. That Cooke's love of wine impaired his powers, and that he allowed it to grow into an odious habit is true, but I believe it is a received doctrine, that the private conduct of a public person is not a fair subject of public criticism; certain it is, that Cooke had been once a man of genius, and his infatuation was rather a topic for commiseration than scorn. There are, however, always in the precincts of the playhouse and the booksellers' shop, a race of human creatures who live by misrepresentation, and who cannot discern the distinction between the misrepresentation and criticism; Cooke had unfortunately, by his infirmity, which in charity may have been said to have grown to disease, furnished that despicable tribe with the means to injure him with the world.

In this year Covent Garden theatre was rebuilt after its destruction by fire, was again opened with a flat prologue, recited by Kemble: and when what was called the O. P. war between the proprietors and the public was put an end to, the business went on as usual. On the errors of Cooke, as they originated in a habit that had now become a vice, it were disagreeable to enlarge. The unfortunate man was every day losing by his behaviour the regard of the London people; and the daily press, forgetful of its own power and dignity, made itself an agent in the unworthy business of holding him up to public contempt.

In the year 1810 and on the 5th of June, he played Falstaff in the First Part of Henry IV., and it was his last performance in London. Soon after, going to Liverpool, he fell in there with the manager of the New York theatre, with whom he entered into an engagement, and embarked for America on the 4th of October, 1810. On the 16th of November 1810, he arrived at New York, where, on the 21st of the same month, he made his first appearance as Richard III. on the

American stage. A vast crowd assembled, great confusion ensued at the theatre, and, to do the inhabitants of that city justice, there was ample anxiety to see him. It is said, that previous to going that night on the stage, he was greatly agitated. He trembled like a novice, and the idea of appearing before a new people, and in a new world, at his advanced life, occupied his whole mind, and filled him with apprehensions greater than he had experienced when he first acted in London.

This was no doubt the truth, for it could not be the effect of professional deference for the taste of the audience, an unjust detractive spirit existing among many Englishmen with respect to that point. Cooke had, in his own circumstances, obvious causes for dismay and emotion, and it may perhaps be said justly, that they overcame the national disrespect with which the audience is regarded. Though the New York audience may not be always judicious in their criticisms of the players from England, the players are still less so in their acting. In the desire to excel and be distinguished, they all overact, and, if the audience do not applaud exactly at the proper place, it is more owing to this cause than to the want of just feeling in the audience.

From New York, Cooke went to Boston, where he performed fourteen nights with his wonted success, but with some drawback on the favour of the public, arising from his truly calamitous habit. But I will hasten over these scenes of melancholy prostration. The details are, in themselves, disgusting; and, considering them as the vice and lapses of a man of genius, they are humiliating to human nature. His American biographer has been, as to his conduct, in my opinion, too minute, but the correctness of his narrative is considered unimpeachable.

The errors of the players, so full of extraordinary occurrences—such pictures at once of high and low human nature—of suffering and enjoyment, form, after all, a disheartening task. Among the incidents of Cooke's imprudence, adventures occur that both shock and injure, by being mingled with circumstances which should be as seldom as possible disclosed. He had a warm and generous heart in the midst of all his grossness; and, in some instances, even in the basest intoxication, it shone forth with a beautiful radiance.

From New York, after his excursion to Boston, and a second engagement had been concluded, he went to Philadelphia. On the eve of his departure, however, he was taken ill, which detained him a short time, but, having recovered, he went forward, and, after several exhibitions, he again fell ill. It could no longer be disguised from himself or his friends that his constitution was breaking up; he lingered, however, with occasional lapses, for some time, performing now and then his favourite characters. His last appearance was in New York, as Richard III., on the 20th of March, 1812, and the progress of decay continued with him till the 26th of September, of that year, when he breathed his last. On the following day his remains were deposited in St. Paul's churchyard, in Broadway, New York, with all due respect, and with many testimonies of popular homage evinced by the multitude that attended his funeral.

It cannot be justly said that Cooke was a performer whose talents were in any degree neglected by the world, although it was late in life before he reached the London stage. He was naturally a man of strong sense, something of Quin's disposition, but he wanted the gentlemanly propriety of that great performer. He is still considered as having been an ornament to his profession, and is never spoken of without an epithet of admiration for his abilities, and a sigh for his incurable indiscretions. Biography affords few examples of a career more disagreeable than that of Cooke, arising almost entirely from the effects of his fatal indulgence, especially after he went to America. Strange that a man, whose histrionic conceptions were more distinguished for good sense and forcible expression than that of any other performer, should have been, in private life, so addicted to wine as to render the word *odious* not too emphatic a phrase in the description of it.

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### MRS. BADDELEY.

“ A kind of sleepy Venns seemed Dadŭ,  
 Yet very fit to murder sleep in those  
 Who gaz'd upon her cheek's transcendent hue,  
 Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose ;  
 Few angles were there in her form, 'tis true,  
 Thinner she might have been and yet scarce lose ;  
 Yet after all 'twould puzzle to say where  
 It would net spoil some separate charm to pare.

She was not violently lively, but  
 Stole on your spirit like a May-day breaking,  
 Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half shut,  
 They put beholders in a tender taking ;  
 She look'd (this simile's quite new,) just cut  
 From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking,  
 The mortal and the marble still at strife,  
 And timidly expanding into life.”—BYRON.

SUCH was Mrs. Baddeley, who, if her mind had even in a remote degree possessed any grace comparable to those of her alluring person, would have ranked among the most celebrated women of ancient or of modern times. But the passion of her life was enjoyment, and, in all its stages, so unchecked by intellectual considerations, that it can only be fitly described by an austere pen.

Sophia Snow, her maiden name, was born in 1745, and was the daughter of the Serjeant-trumpeter to King George II. Her education was genteel, and she was early distinguished for the melody of her voice, the soft delicacy of her beauty, and an indescribable sweetness of manner.

Her father saw in her vocal endowments a treasure deserving of the utmost care, and cultivated her taste for music with ardent

assiduity, but his discipline was severe : perhaps, however, he may have been excited by her inattention, for she was of an easy, indolent, voluptuous nature, and delighted more to indulge in the love-tales of novels, than to study the task of his lessons.

His zeal in tuition, and her longing for more pleasureable pastime, led soon to the natural result. At eighteen she eloped with Baddeley, who then belonged to the Drury-Lane company, and soon after, in 1764, when she had become his wife, she made her first appearance on the stage as Cordelia, in *Leur*, and was received with the loudest applause.

Her debut was, however, rendered remarkable by an occurrence which affected the feelings of the audience more than her singular beauty. Never having seen the play, and being requested to read the part in the absence of an actress who was suddenly taken ill, when Edgar came upon the stage as mad Tom, his figure and manner gave her such a shock that she screamed in real terror and fainted. This unexpected incident roused the sympathy of all present, and when she recovered, and resumed the performance, she was encouraged to proceed with the most generous plaudits.

Her vocal powers were deemed of the highest order, and she was soon engaged as a singer at Vauxhall, and subsequently at Ranelagh, where her salary was twelve guineas a-week. Her forte at the theatre was genteel comedy ; but once, during the illness of Mrs. Barry, she performed the part of Mrs. Beverley in *The Gamester*, and acquitted herself with more than common ability.

At what time her career of shame began admits of no precise proof ; but for the space of three years which she lived with her husband, there was no public impeachment of her character : she, appears, however, before her separation from Baddeley, to have received the visits of dissolute young nobleman, and there is cause to fear that long before she threw herself publicly away, her conduct had not been without some secret stain.

Soon after their separation, Mr. and Mrs. Baddeley continued to perform at the same theatre together, without speaking to each other, save in their respective parts : she then squandering character in gay profligacy, and he a calm auditor to the reports of her intrigues.

On one occasion, when their Majesties King George III. and Queen Charlotte, of punctilious memory, were present, Mrs. Baddeley played Fanny in *The Claudestine Marriage*, and her husband Canton. In the scene where the Swiss exhausts all his adulation to recommend her to Lord Ogleby, their relative situation caused a universal laugh, in which the King and Queen heartily joined. And she was next day honoured with a message from George the Third, desiring her to go to Zoffany, and have her picture taken in the attitude and situation in which she appeared when Fanny joins Canton and Lord Ogleby, and when the application for the man she loves is construed by his Lordship into an amorous solicitation himself.

The incident of her picture having been ordered by his Majesty, tended to make her more the fashion, and the prodigality lavished upon her by her admirers, showed the extent to which beauty will seduce its votaries, when celebrity flavours the delicious cup.

Among her numberless suitors was a young nobleman, whose ardour was certainly somewhat of a peculiar taste, for he solicited an interview with her in Henry VII.'s Chapel. His love, however, was rejected, but he presented her with three hundred pounds for her friendship, and they made a moral tour of the Abbey together, and were vastly pleased with the wax-work. Subsequently, he became her prodigal protector.

Although the life of Mrs. Baddeley was not remarkable for kindly feelings, she was not incapable of attachments, and once when deserted in displeasure by one of her admirers, she swallowed poison, from which she was recovered with difficulty. It is true that she was then deeply in debt, the plagues of which, without the anguish of faithless love, have broken as tough a heart.

There is nothing more remarkable in all the biography of Mrs. Baddeley, than the influence she appears to have possessed among the great, even reaching to public patronage. The same moral laxity, in which it originated, may exist as powerfully in the present time; perhaps it would be considered affectation to doubt it; but unquestionably the age has improved in decorum; and if we are not more virtuous than our predecessors, more homage is now paid to public opinion. It does not however appear, that she made any sordid traffic of her patronage, but only occasionally employed it to soften the asperities of misfortune to her friends.

One part of her conduct was something akin to fatality; for although it may be justly said that she was in the enjoyment of great affluence, yet such was her contempt for fortune, and the prodigality of her expenditure, that she was ever standing on the brink of want. The slightest indisposition would at any time, in her highest state, have hurled her to beggary. She never appears to have had any thought of to-morrow, for she scattered her money with the most imprudent profusion; bought dresses and jewels without measure, and bestowed them on her acquaintances so readily as to diminish the value of her reckless gifts.

On one occasion she was advised, for the determination could spring from no motive of her own, to apply to Garrick for an increase of salary; but he refused to comply with her request, and in consequence she resolved to quit the stage, and in disgust actually did so for a considerable time. At this period she was under the protection of her Abbey lover, who appears to have really felt uncommon attachment to her, mingled with vanity, for he supplied her caprice with the most extraordinary liberality.

Mrs. Baddeley was only celebrated for beauty and professional talent. She may have been intelligent in other respects, and possessed of conversational graces; but the fact does not appear; on the contrary, she seems to have been under the level of most women in understanding. Cunning, however, was deeply ingrained with apparent simplicity, and by it she deceived those who esteemed themselves greatest in her confidence.

Her conduct, when her mother was supposed to be dying, was as heartless as if it had been a tragedy spectacle of the theatre. She was at the bedside, all tears—a very Magdalen—and received the ex-

hortations of her afflicted parent with many penitential promises ; but as Mrs. Snow did not immediately then die she quitted the sick chamber, resumed her profligacy, and, with no symptom of contrition, proposed to her female friend that they should go to Paris to see the French amusements, and, if possible, to bring over new dresses. This turpitude was of a more offensive hue than either whim or thoughtlessness ; for, notwithstanding the tears and pledges on her knees to her dying mother, the journey was to fulfil a promise she was under at the time to a favourite paramour.

He had, however, returned to England before she arrived at Paris ; but nevertheless, as if infected with the volatile genius of the place, she set herself earnestly to enjoy its pleasures.

Immediately the most fashionable shoemaker was summoned, the sketch of whose appearance is an amusing picture of the Parisian manners of that period. He was dressed in the highest style of the mode, in a suit of black silk, with a cocked-hat under his arm, his hair superbly magnified with frizzle and powder, and his thigh sustaining a courtier's sword. This phenomenon, common to Paris in those days, was rendered complete, when, after performing his congees, he called in his servant, who attended with a silk bag of shapes and patterns, to display the glory of his art.

Another of her Parisian adventures had true comedy in it, and might be worked into an agreeable farce. After viewing the porcelain manufacture at Sevres, she stopped at the inn for dinner, at which two daughters of the landlady attended.

It was soon observed that one of them eyed the female companion of Mrs. Baddeley in a particular manner, in consequence of taking it into her head, that because she was dressed in a riding-habit she was a gentleman in disguise. Mrs. Baddeley humoured her fancy, and said, " If not engaged, this friend of mine, who has dressed himself like a woman, is so much in love with you, that I don't know what will be the consequence."

The simple girl replied, that she had never before seen a man she could make choice of. The companion assured her that she was indeed a woman, but Mrs. Baddeley contradicted her ; and when she retired to her chamber, the silly maiden, in the plainest terms, and with the utmost naïveté, declared how much she was dying with love ; saying, that she might be little esteemed for declaring her passion, but she was unable to conceal it, and would follow her to the world's end. Mrs. Baddeley came into the room and insisted that the girl should be made happy ; the landlady also came in, and approving the choice, told them that her daughter had a pretty fortune, and would make a good wife for any man ; upon which the enamoured damsel threw her arms round the neck of her adored, and began to weep, and kiss, and fondle over her.

As Mrs. Baddeley found it would be necessary to stop for the night, to keep up the farce she ordered in her hearing two bedrooms, and when her companion went to take possession of hers, she found the demoiselle secreted there : this brought on the denouement.

After having indulged herself with all the sights worth seeing

within fifty miles of Paris, Mrs. Baddeley left that city on her return to London. In the course of the journey to Calais, as she travelled night and day, she and her friend were often a good deal intimidated by the innkeepers, who would have induced them to stay at their houses for the night ; but in despite of all the frightful tales of many robberies, they still hastened on. One night, however, they were pursued by two horsemen ; they ordered their drivers to mend their pace,—the horsemen bellowed stop, stop !—the drivers hastened forward, their attendants seized their pistols, and the ladies took one each, determined on resistance. At last the horsemen reached them, as much alarmed as themselves, for they had been sent by the landlord of the inn where they had last stopped, to ask four shillings omitted in their bill.

Having crossed the Channel and reached Tunbridge in safety, after bribing the custom-house officers both at Calais and Dover, they were showing their Parisian finery to a milliner from London whom they met there ; while in this delightful business, another harpy of the revenue pounced upon them, and not only seized their trunks, but rummaged the house of the milliner, and made much booty.

This adventure was only deplored by our heroine on account of her new dresses, for, in apprehension of being fined, she durst not apply for her clothes. Indeed, she possessed the true equanimity of her profession, and was seldom disturbed even when involved in danger. An accident that illustrates this deserves to be recorded.

She was, among other fancies of self-indulgence, very fond of cats, and had a favourite of this species called Cuddle, which she often took with her when she travelled. On a journey to Portsmouth, when this cat was with her, and her female companion also in the carriage, the post-boys overturned them, and dragged the coach in their carelessness some way before they could stop the horses, by which the door and the panels were broken on one side, and the whole cargo within tumbled out on the road ; no bones were however broken, but Mrs. Baddeley, in the midst of the alarm and confusion, got up and cried aloud for Cuddle, declaring if he was hurt she would go distracted.

At this period she indulged in every luxury that her extravagance desired. On one occasion her Westminster Abbey friend made her a present of twenty diamond pins, which cost four hundred guineas. She always wore two watches with valuable trinkets ; one of them was very costly, and the other, a little French watch, hung to a chain set with diamonds ; she had also four necklaces of brilliants. She wore enamelled bracelets encircled with diamonds, and a diamond bow with rings out of number ; she had a sideboard of plate, and silver candlesticks. Her house was elegantly furnished ; the walls of the drawing-room were hung with silk curtains drawn up in festoons in imitation of Madame du Barre's at Versailles, and every thing about her establishment was of the most splendid kind ; she kept nine servants, and her liveries were suitable to her establishment.

From this high and palmy state of opulence and prodigality I have now to trace her fall. The first symptom was an ominous feeling



which arose upon her in a conversation with one of her admirers, while he was advising her to remember that beauty would not last for ever, and to provide for a rainy day.

"There is time enough for that," said she, "but for my part I will have my frolics and pleasures, convinced I shall not live to be old. I am not a child, and need not advice of this kind. I have talents, and a profession to follow, and should age come on, shall be in no want of a provision." At this she burst into tears, and lamented that she had not at her outset in life met with a man who would have treated her as a wife ought to have been; adding, "I know too well my faults and my imprudence; but one folly led to another, and vanity, which is my greatest failing, encouraged by the attention I met from men of rank and fortune, induced me to accept offers which should have been spurned. Thus introduced into a bad plan of life, necessity kept it up, and I have become a sacrifice to my own folly. Though in the highest splendour I often look down and envy the situation of the lowest of my servants, and fancy her far more happy. She earns her bread by her industry, and when her daily work is done can sit down with a quiet conscience, clear from vice. Many a cottage have I looked on with a wishful eye, and thought the people within, though poor, and perhaps without a chair to sit upon, much more happy and contented than I, who passed it in a coach-and-four, attended with a suite of servants." Here her tears again interrupted her, and she was with difficulty withdrawn from these foreboding accusations of herself—

"The shaft was shot, but had not fallen yet."

This striking confession of her inward misery took place at Brighton, where soon after, she walked out on the Steyne, and was the admiration of all beholders, many of the ladies exclaiming loud enough to be heard, "There is that divine face! that beautiful creature! What a sweet woman!"

In the course of a short time her debts began to be troublesome, and she was reduced to the necessity of pawning some of her jewels, and her protector became less prodigal of his presents, while, with the increase of her embarrassments, her conduct grew more irregular, and her circumspection less guarded. Her infidelities at last reached to such a pitch of notoriety, that the weak and fond nobleman, who seemed to set no limit at one time to his indulgence, in consequence of her ostrich-like cunning, in a profligate flight that she made in his absence to Ireland, broke off the connection with her altogether. A rapid downward doom was then inevitable. A subscription was attempted, and failed, or rather was so unproductive as to show that the epoch of her alluring was past. But the details of her subsequent history are painful to describe, and consist only of such transactions as ever attend the progress of vice, and the curtain must be dropped on the scenes of her last act. She died at Edinburgh, on the 1st of July 1801, it has been alleged by swallowing laudanum, but the odious narrative of her biographer ascribes her death to consumption, and in circumstances so deplorable, that she was supported by the weekly contributions of the players.

## MISS FARREN.

THE materials for the life of this elegant lady are few, and except in one incident not remarkable. Her memory, however, ought to be cherished among the players, not so much on account of her eminence in the profession, as for the example she sets in the propriety of her conduct, which, notwithstanding all the temptations that surrounded her, was so unblemished as to make her elevation to an ancient coronet seem almost a becoming reward. But, perhaps, it belongs to the merits of her character, that her career, though one of the most distinguished, has been so free of adventure. The life of an actor, after reputation has been established, flows on in an unvaried tenour, save when native eccentricity impels to deviation.

Miss Farren was born in 1759. Her father was a surgeon and apothecary in Cork, and her mother the daughter of a brewer in Liverpool. There was, therefore, nothing in the circumstances of her birth particularly calculated to produce that ease, grace, and delicacy for which she was afterwards justly celebrated. They were, like the brilliancy of Mrs. Woffington, natural gifts polished by correct taste, and regulated by good sense and discernment. Her early domestic circumstances were indeed unfavourable to the acquisition of elegance, and it must ever be ascribed both to talent and judgment that she rose so beautifully above them—for the habits of her father were low and irregular, and had it not been for the exertions of her mother, and the assistance occasionally received from her relations, the condition of the family must have been wretched in the extreme.

Although the world possesses no record of the difficulties which clouded the morning of Miss Farren's life, they were of a kind easily conceived. Penury blew blightingly, and grief at the sight of a parent, often deformed by dissipation, and yet in other moments exhibiting qualities entitled to love and esteem, darkened the aspect of her future fortunes.

She was very young when she made her first appearance on the stage. It was at Liverpool, in 1773, in the character of Rosetta, in the comic opera of *Love in a Village*, but, although then only in her fifteenth year, she gave such promise of excellence, that she almost immediately became a favourite with the public, and afterwards, with increasing estimation, acted at Shrewsbury, Chester, and those other towns which then constituted the orbit of the Liverpool company.

Younger, the manager, was an old and experienced veteran; he saw, from the first night, that Miss Farren was destined to attain distinction in her profession, and assisted her studies, and watched over her with parental solicitude. In 1777, he advised her to seek her fortune in London, and gave her an introduction to the elder Colman, at whose theatre in the Haymarket she soon after appeared, on the 10th of June, as Miss Hardcastle, in *She Stoops to Conquer*.\*

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\* Edwin and Henderson also appeared on the same night,

It is not a part that was exactly suited to the display of her peculiar excellencies, but she nevertheless acquitted herself so well in it that the newspaper critics described her performance as not unworthy of the great theatres. Her person was thin, genteel, and above the middle stature ; her countenance expressive, and full of of sensibility ; her voice clear, but rather sharp and unvaried ; her action not awkward, and her delivery emphatic and distinct. "When," says the critic of the day, "Miss Farren learns to tread the stage with more ease, to modulate and vary her voice ; to correct, inspirit, and regulate her action ; and to give a proper utterance to her feelings, by a suitable expression of voice and countenance, in our opinion she will be a most valuable acquisition to our London theatres."

Considering the haste in which the morning criticisms on the theatres are written, and the little time allowed to solicit the fittest phrase to convey the degree of merit that the critics would express, it is still sufficiently obvious that her first appearance must have been highly satisfactory to the public, and encouraging to herself. But the true bent of her talents was not at the time perceived, and was rather a disclosure by accident to herself, the managers and the audience.

In the winter she accepted an offer from Covent Garden, but she did not greatly increase her fame there ; for the managers placed her in tragedy, where, though her taste and good sense allowed no failure, she yet could achieve nothing beyond respectable mediocrity. At Drury Lane theatre she, however, found her proper stage, to which she soon after removed, but still as a tragic actress, till accident brought her into her destined sphere.

It happened that Mrs. Abington, the delight of the town in her particular range of character, went to Covent Garden, and the proprietors selected Miss Farren to fill her place. The choice at the time was deemed hazardous to the fame of the lady. The public had previously entertained great hopes of her, and it was on that anticipation that she had been selected ; but Mrs. Abington was so established in the parts that Miss Farren was called on to supply, that they were in a great measure considered as peculiarly her own : a circumstance that exposed her acting to a severe test, placing her, a novice, in comparison with one, who to great natural excellence added long experience ; but she withstood the ordeal. Parsons, who had the tact to discover her true merit, advised her to make her experiment in the rivalry, with Lady Townley ; and so complete was her success that the performance was not only crowned with great applause, but procured her the acquaintance of many of the most respectable in the fashionable circles.

In the style of her acting as Lady Townley I have been often assured that she afforded a very fascinating representation of a thoughtless lady of quality, whose real virtues were disguised by follies carelessly assumed. It was marked with even more delicacy than Mrs. Abington had been able to show in any of her performances, and in this respect finely presented a gentlewoman of the same nature, but in the opinion of the public more refined. Her talents were perhaps, however, less versatile, and after having seen her in

all those different characters, in which she was deemed happiest, the conclusion was general that although Lady Townley was not her most pleasing personation, it was the part in which her art and endowment were best shown. The public preferred her Lady Teazle, and it appears that it must have been distinguished by some superior charm; but I have been told by good judges that it was in several points not so appropriate in manner as the performance of Mrs. Jordan. Those of that opinion regarded it as too much of the fine lady, and defective in those little points and sparkles of rusticity, which are still by the philosophical critics supposed to mark the country education of the fascinating heroine. She was as the camellia of the conservatory—soft, beautiful, and delicate: and Mrs. Jordan's as the rose of the garden sprinkled with dew.

It cannot be disputed, from all I have been ever able to learn respecting the style of Miss Farren, that, although it was superior, indeed, of its kind, her talents were of very limited scope. In the ladies of comedy she had no competitor; they were, however, all much alike, and equally remarkable for that sensitive delicacy which may be said to have been her distinguishing characteristic; in other parts, though always respectable, she could never exhibit any thing like the splendour which fascinated in her proper walk.

She had not been long on the London stage when, by the propriety of her private conduct, and the gracefulness of her professional merit, she was invited to distinguished parties in fashionable life, where she attracted the attention of the Earl of Derby. The domestic circumstances of his Lordship rendered a union impossible so long as the Countess lived, and the profession and origin of Miss Farren might have rendered, therefore, a liaison between them not offensive in the eyes of many in the world. But not a whisper of scandal was breathed upon their intimacy. His Lordship, on the contrary, discovered that the more he knew of her she better deserved his esteem, and they judiciously placed a restraint on their mutual passion by never being seen together except in the presence of a third party.

At length the Countess of Derby, who had lived long separate from her lord, died, and the way being thus cleared for Miss Farren, she took leave of the public at Drury Lane on the 7th of April, 1797, as Lady Teazle in *The School for Scandal*, and, on the 8th of May following, was married to the Earl by special licence, at his Lordship's mansion in Grosvenor Square. With this event her biography, according to the plan of this work, should conclude, but it would look like stinted praise to amiable merit were it omitted to be mentioned that, in real dignity, she conducted herself as elegantly deserving of admiration, as in the mimic scene. Queen Charlotte, the most rigid discriminator of female worth, received her with marks of special recognisance, and it must be regarded as a peculiar honour, conferred for the blamelessness of her professional life, that she was selected to make one in the procession at the marriage of the Princess Royal. She did not succumb to the hand of death till after having long enjoyed the distinctions and opulence of her rank.\*

\* Considering the tone of approbation in which the foregoing sketch has been expressed, it is perhaps necessary to mention that I have perused with attention

## MRS. JORDAN.

It is impossible to think of this lady without pleasure, or to read her story without pity. The name by which she became so celebrated was assumed ; her real name was Dorothy Bland, and it is conjectured that she was born in Waterford, about the year 1762. In 1777, she made her first appearance on the stage in Dublin, as Miss Francis, under the management of Ryder, in the Phebe of *As You Like It* ; but it was not till the next season, when engaged with his rival Daly, that her theatrical career properly began.

She was taken by him to Cork, in her seventeenth year and though not eminent for great beauty, was much admired for an archness of manner even more winning. The playhouse happened that season not to be popular, and, on her benefit, the audience was so thin, that the young men present insisted that she should be favoured with another night, which being granted, they exerted themselves so well in the disposal of tickets, that the result far exceeded her expectations : an incident which sufficiently proves that her talents, and the charm of her delightful and sportive simplicity, were even then so obvious as to be deemed entitled to encouragement.

It was not, however, till July 1782, that Mrs. Jordan came to Leeds in England, where she arrived with her mother, brother, and sister. Tate Wilkinson was manager, and in Mrs. Bland, the mother, he discovered a lady who had performed Desdemona with himself at Dublin twenty-four years before. He, in consequence of that circumstance, rejoiced to see them, and inquired of our heroine whether her line was tragedy, comedy, or opera, and was exceedingly astonished when answered "all." After some conversation, he formed an engagement with her, and, on the 11th of July 1782, she was put up for Calista in *The Fair Penitent*.

Wilkinson, during their first interview, had detected no comic symptom about her ; but the melody of her voice, in a few lines which she repeated of that part, deeply affected his feelings, and he poured out his praise of the truth and nature with which she had comprehended their sentiment, with no stinted applause.

Besides the tragic part of Calista, it was announced in the bills that she would sing the song of *The Greenwood Ladlie*, but, on the night of her appearance, she was listened to with so much attention during the tragedy, that he became apprehensive at the ludicrous

the Memoirs of Lady Derby, published under the signature of Petronius Arbitrator, and that, although the author has indulged himself in ill-natured and envious satire, he has not found that his malice could impute worse to her than original poverty. The biographical sketch, in reply to that sordid attack, contradicts some of the alleged calumny ; but no contradiction was necessary, except on the imputed ingratitude to Mr. Younger of Liverpool, and that has been effectually proved to have been an invention. Doubtless the elevation to which she had raised herself in private society may have made her fastidious towards some of the players, and provoked tattle and enmity ; but the decorum with which she upheld her rank as a Countess goes far to prove the solid worth of her character.

idea of Calista rising from the dead and rushing before the audience to sing a ballad which nobody cared about ; his apprehensions, however, were of short duration, when she jumped on the stage with her elastic spring, in a frock and mob-cap, and, with her voice and smile fascinated the audience.

From Leeds she proceeded with Wilkinson to York. It was then the race-week, when the theatre is always well attended, and an opportunity was offered her of playing Priscilla Tomboy in *The Romp*, before William Smith of Drury Lane. Smith was warm-hearted and gentlemanly, and when he discovered merit was not slow in communicating to others the impression he had received from it. He both wrote and spoke of Mrs. Jordan's talents with enthusiasm, insomuch that Wilkinson became alarmed lest he should be obliged to part with his "treasure."

From York she went with the company round their circuit, in the course of which the manager thought that Sheffield might merit a visit, although of late that town had shown a ruinous indifference to theatrical exhibitions ; accordingly, they went also thither, and her reputation was considerably increased by her unabated endeavours to attain excellence.

The company then travelled to Kingston-upon-Hull, where, by the end of the year, her talents so highly excited the envy of her stage sisters, that they began to insinuate detraction against her private conduct insomuch that her reception was very chilling ; but when it became known that her manners were decorous, and her diligence extraordinary, she was fully received into favour, and her benefit flatteringly attended.

In 1783 she appeared for the first time in a male part, William, in the pleasing opera of *Rosina*, though with éclat, not probably with that warmth of applause which she subsequently received in it ; for a country audience, in these transformations, is generally more fastidious than a metropolitan.

During the spring meeting at York, the jealousy of the female performers often annoyed her, particularly a Mrs. Ward, a competitor with her in male parts. This lady was at the head of the spiteful, who placed themselves at the stage-doors, and with all their ingenuity endeavoured to disturb the self-possession of Mrs. Jordan while acting. In this envious cruelty they persevered so long that at last she affected to be exceedingly distressed by the annoyance, and intreated the sympathy of the audience by the appearance she assumed. This led to inquiries, and, in the end, the malignants were scattered from their post.

At this period there was a Mrs. Brown in the company, possessed of great comic talent, who in her range of characters acted the Country Girl in such a manner as to attract the particular attention of Mrs. Jordan, who till then was unacquainted with the part. Those who recollect the rich excellence and artlessness with which she afterwards performed this character, will readily acknowledge that the conception of it must have been truly her own, but detraction has ascribed her grace and naïveté in it to an imitation of Mrs. Brown,—as if that could be called an imitation which far transcended

the original. The elastic step, artless action, the sincere laugh, and, if the expression may be used, the juicy tones of her clear and melodious voice, so peculiar to Mrs. Jordan, could never have been attained by studying any other. The manner in which she used to pronounce the single word "ecod!" was as if she had taken a mouthful of some ripe and delicious peach.

In 1785, Mrs. Jordan was engaged for Drury Lane theatre, and it is said that previous to her departure from Tate Wilkinson's company she evinced a degree of chagrin at something in her situation with it, which often betrayed her into spirits of petulance at variance with the wonted tenour of her excellent temper, insomuch that it tended to deteriorate the favour which she had enjoyed with the public, and in consequence her benefit at Leeds was very thinly attended. Mrs. Siddons, who saw her while this mood was on her, formed no very elevated idea of her powers, and thought she was better where she was than to venture on the London boards.

Her last performance with Wilkinson's company was at Wakefield, on Friday September, 9, 1785, as Patrick in *The Poor Soldier*, after which she proceeded to fulfil her London engagement, and, it is said, diffident of success; indeed, it would seem that she had still no reason to be otherwise, for, whatever might be her own consciousness of ability, her success in the country had not been eminently triumphant, as her salary, which was only four pounds per week, sufficiently proves.

On the 18th of October 1785, she made her appearance in *The Country Girl*. "She came to town," says Mrs. Inchbald, "with no report in her favour to elevate her above a very moderate salary, or to attract more than a very moderate house when she appeared. But here moderation stopped. She at once displayed such consummate art with such bewitching nature, such excellent sense, and such innocent simplicity, that her auditors were boundless in their plaudits, and so warm in their praises when they left the theatre, that their friends at home would not give credit to the extent of their eulogiums." Such is the account of Mrs. Jordan's first appearance in the metropolis, and perhaps no actress ever excited so much true laughter as this delightful lady in the course of her subsequent career.

Her second part was Viola, in *The Twelfth Night*, which she acted on the 11th of November 1785. Her merit in this very different character from Peggy was unquestionably of as high an order, but it was of that kind which is more frequently exhibited, and though requiring equal judgment, stands less in need of peculiar endowment. To Viola succeeded Imogen, in *Cymbeline*, a part of the same genus, and although it never admitted of a question that in these delicate characters Mrs. Jordan shone with unrivalled excellence, yet the taste of the town took more to her comic vein; nor is this to be much wondered at, for, in the representations on the stage, a farce somehow affords more pleasure, though of a different kind, than even *Macbeth*; and the same thing often happens in literature; authors of very paltry powers are frequently raised for a time to great popularity, while those of far higher genius are allowed to pine in neglect. Milton was a century in coming to his fame as a poet.

In the course of the season Mrs. Jordan had so fully established herself in the good graces of the London audience, that her salary was doubled, and two benefits allowed her. When the season was over, she returned to Leeds, thinking it not improbable that Wilkinson, now that she had stood the ordeal of London, would entreat her to act. On the night of her arrival she went to the theatre, and was recognised with pleasure by the audience, and between the play and farce went down to the green-room and made her compliments to her former associates. Afterwards, as she had anticipated, the manager solicited her to act for a single night, dividing the profits with her, after deducting fifteen pounds for the expenses. In this he acted with commendable liberality, for he did not expect any great profit; he remembered that the Leeds people had enjoyed or neglected her for four summers, and had not distinguished her farewell benefit by any particular patronage. But Fashion had worked a mighty change; though Mrs. Jordan was still only the same, the test of London had determined her value, and the Leeds public longed to see the actress who was now found inestimable, but whom so few months before they had regarded as but little worthy of their esteem. On the 21st of June she performed in *The Country Girl*, and the house overflowed before the play began: no less than seven rows of the pit were laid into boxes. It is this uncertainty in the favour of the public that deprives their applause of half its value. Mrs. Jordan could not but rejoice in the profits of her performance; if she had any gratification in the plaudits of the crowd, it must have partaken of a vindictive sentiment, such as the injured feel when they obtain justice.

From Leeds she proceeded to York, where she again performed her most celebrated parts, but not with such decided success as she expected: for Mrs Siddons, who was to succeed her, was there the favourite. But on going North, to Edinburgh, her reception was all she could desire, and in taking her benefit she evinced her gratitude by reciting a poetical address of her own composition, easy and fluent in the verse, and rather, perhaps, above the ordinary chiming of such sort of stage stratagems. She thence proceeded to Glasgow, where she was also welcomed with much distinction; indeed, to do the play-goers of that city justice, they on this occasion shewed something of classic taste mingled with a little jealousy of their Edinburgh neighbours. They presented her with a gold medal with an inscription, as Mr. Boaden says, not badly twined, and transmitted it with a single line of admiration and jealousy.

“ TO MRS. JORDAN.

“ MADAM,

“ ACCEPT this trifle from the Glasgow audience, who are as great admirers of genius as the critics of Edinburgh.”

The inscription on the medal was allusive to the Glasgow arms, a tree, &c.

“ Bays from our tree you could not gather  
No branch of it deserves the name;  
So take it all, call it a feather,  
And place it in your cap of fame.”



This is certainly not very perspicuous, and needs a note to explain it, but the conceit of honouring a distinguished public person with a medal had something elegant in it.

She then returned to Drury Lane theatre, and her regular career now commenced. Her life falling into the routine of her profession, for a long time afforded few incidents into which the public could have any legitimate authority to pry.

In the summer (1787), she again made another professional tour northward, and during the three nights she performed at Leeds her success was as brilliant as on the single night on which she acted there the preceding year. But considering her now at the summit of her profession it is not my intention to be more circumstantial. Those who recollect her prime must acknowledge that in several favourite parts she has never had any competitor that could in the remotest degree be compared with her. In her peculiar comic style there was the strongest stamp of what is called genius that can well be imagined ; it was emphatically natural, but such nature as is only rarely seen, and yet it was altogether art—consummate art.

To compare Mrs. Jordan's merits with those of Mrs. Siddons, if poetical supremacy must be awarded to deliberate grandeur and solemnity of the latter, the former must still be allowed to have been in her own walk equally great, though the greatness was of a different kind. In the performance of Mrs. Siddons' the spectator sat astonished, and at her occasional bursts of glorious passion expressed to his neighbour wonder and delight ; but no one had ever that perception of art who saw Mrs. Jordan in her favourite characters : no one ever felt that he beheld reality in Mrs. Siddons, but something more sublime,—the poetry of human nature ; and yet in the midst of an enjoyment equally refined, it was impossible ever to imagine that the acting of her winning contemporary was the effect of assumed feelings and artificial impulses. It was the perfect manner in which Mrs. Jordan inhaled the spirit of her part that her inimitable power of delighting consisted.

The progress of Mrs. Jordan in her profession was marked in Yorkshire with less approbation than in any other part of the kingdom, and perhaps it was owing to her having discerned the indifferent judgment exercised by the audiences there, that caused her to regard her first departure for London with that distaste against them which has been already noticed. It is said that at one time she felt her insensibility so strongly that she declared she never would act again among them. Whether this coldness on their part arose from any general carelessness about dramatic entertainments, or particular feeling towards her, might be susceptible of question, had not Mrs. Siddons observed in her own case the same thing as a common attendant on acting in the country. "Acting Isabella, for instance," said she, "out of London, is double fatigue ; there the loud and long applause at the great points and striking situations invigorated the system, and the time it occupied recruited the health and nerve. A cold, respectful, and hard audience chills and deadens an actress, and throws her back upon herself ; whereas the warmth of approbation confirms her in the character, and she kindles with the enthusiasm she feels around."

This is no doubt true : it has been often observed that the players do not perform so well to thin audiences as when the theatre is full ; but I am inclined to think that the cursory inspection of the merits of Mrs. Jordan in Yorkshire was not altogether owing to this cause, but had something of a speciality of taste in it. They preferred the courtly style of Miss Farren; which, with all its elegance, was of a far lower kind than the playful buoyancy of Mrs. Jordan's : a circumstance which suggests, as a conjecture, that they were in those days, probably inferior in taste to many other parts of the country where there is alike less opulence and fewer pretensions to fashion. It may not, in fact, however have been so, but the admiration of attitudinarian gracefulness has long been regarded as the mintage of rank by those who do not consider that it is only an acquirement impressed by education to conceal some natural deficiency ; at least, the high and low vulgar have ever a notion that the visible touch of the dancing-master is necessary to authenticate polite manners, and to verify the true demeanour of fashionable life. They cannot imagine that all the real difference between a good and bad manner consists in the former being only more gentle and more guarded in the disclosure of common feelings. The hoyden tickling of propriety, which Mrs. Jordan in her romping so felicitously practised, was among the extremest sallies of a happy nature, and in its essence as pure as the graces that were deemed more genteel. Had the effervescence of her familiarity been stronger, it might have offended delicacy, but its joyous sparkling only increased the aroma.

In 1790, when she formed her domestic connexion with the Duke of Clarence, she was considerably annoyed at the strictures of the newspapers on that circumstance, for by the dint of their endeavours to represent her as losing her respect for the public in consequence of private blandishments, a very strong feeling was excited. On the 10th of December 1790 this was so obviously the case, that when she came on the stage the displeasure was manifest, but she advanced to the front and intrepidly said to the audience :—

“ Ladies and Gentlemen,

“ I should conceive myself utterly unworthy of your favour, if the slightest mark of public disapprobation did not affect me very sensibly.

“ Since I have had the honour and the happiness to strive here to please you, it has been my constant endeavour, by unremitting assiduity, to merit your approbation. I beg leave to assure you, upon my honour, that I have never absented myself one minute from the duties of my profession but from real indisposition ; thus having invariably acted, I *do* consider myself under the public protection.”

The force of manner in which this was delivered, and the style in which she resumed her character in the play, produced all the effect that could have been desired, and from that time her domestic situation was not adverted to as a cause to annoy her in her profession. The incident is, however, curious, as affording a trait of the personal energy of her character more decisive than any other hitherto mentioned ; for she was naturally nervous and

even timid, until actually before the audience on the stage. It might, therefore, have been supposed that in this little scene she would have been incapable of such self-possession ; she appears, however, to have enjoyed great moral courage, and to have possessed resources in it that qualified her to withstand the shocks of adversity with firmness and resolution.

In her feelings Mrs. Jordan was warm and generous ; in those exhibitions of the theatre, given to assist individual distress, and to aid the families of the sailors who suffered in the great sea-fights, her assistance was ever ready. An anecdote of her private charity possesses both beauty and character. When at Chester a widow was thrown into prison by a creditor for a small debt, which, with expenses, amounted to eight pounds ; this Mrs. Jordan paid. On the afternoon of the same day the poor woman was liberated, and as her benefactor was taking her usual walk, the widow with her children followed, and just as Mrs. Jordan had taken shelter in a porch from a shower of rain, dropped on her knees in gratitude to thank her. The children, beholding the emotion of their mother, by their cries made the scene so affecting, that Mrs. Jordan, unable to control her feelings, stooped to kiss the children, and slipping a pound note into the mother's hand requested, in her usual playful manner, that she would go away.

Another person, who had taken shelter under the porch and witnessed the transaction, came forward and said, "Lady, pardon the freedom of a stranger, but would to the Lord the world were all like thee !"

His figure bespoke his calling, and she immediately retreated a little, and said, "No, I won't shake hands with you !"

"Why ?"

"Because you are a Methodist preacher, and when you know who I am you'll send me to the devil."

"The Lord forbid ! I am, as you say, a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who tells us to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and relieve the distressed ; and do you think I can behold a sister fulfil the commands of my Great Master without feeling that spiritual attachment which leads me to break through worldly customs, and offer you the right hand of friendship and brotherly love ?"

"Well, you are a good old soul, I dare say, but I don't like fanatics, and you'll not like me when I tell you who I am."

"I hope I shall."

"Well, then, I am a player."

The preacher sighed.

"Yes, I am a player, and you must have heard of me,—Mrs. Jordan is my name."

After a short pause he again extended his hand, and, with a complaisant countenance, replied :—

"The Lord bless thee, whoever thou art ! His goodness is unlimited. He has bestowed on thee a large portion of his spirit ; and, as to thy calling, if thy soul upbraid thee not, the Lord forbid that I should !"

Thus reconciled, and the rain abated, they left the porch: the

offer of his arm was accepted, and they proceeded arm-in-arm together ; at parting, the preacher shook hands with her, saying :—

“ Fare thee well, sister ; I know not what the principles of people of thy calling may be ; thou art the first I ever conversed with ; but, if their benevolent practices equal thine, I hope and trust at the great day the Almighty will say to each, ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee.’ ”

The education of Mrs. Jordan appears to have been bestowed on a better soil than is common to the ladies of the stage, whose literary attainments are rarely remarkable. That she possessed a vivid zest for poetry may be naturally concluded from the taste she evinced in the selection of such gentle parts as *Viola* and *Imogen* ; but she also wrote verses with facility, and sometimes with a glow of sentiment that was often elegant and almost poetical. Whether, however, her pen ever aspired to greater things than occasional lines, does not seem to be determined, but, from those she has written, there can be no doubt that she was capable of higher flights and more considerable effusions.

From 1809 to 1811, it was publicly alleged that the circumstances of the Duke of Clarence were embarrassed, and also that his connexion with Mrs. Jordan was no longer productive of that felicity which had once rendered it a topic of admiration, but it has since been ascertained that the former allegation was grossly exaggerated, and that the latter was untrue. Why, then, it may be asked, did they separate ? To this question I presume not to offer an answer, but I am inclined to think that the cause may, perhaps, be found in the state of the Royal family. With, therefore, no other grounds for conjecture, I imagine that the separation was dictated by state policy, for, notwithstanding the numerous family of George III. the prospect of male heirs from him to the crown was exceedingly doubtful, and, in proportion to the uncertainty, it is natural to suppose that the family may have become anxious for the marriage of the Princes. I do not, however, insist on this notion, but it appears as likely to have been the real cause of the separation, as many of the absurd and unjust tales industriously published at the time concerning it. I ground my opinion on the simple fact there was no quarrel between the parties when the separation did take place ; on the contrary, the Duke himself communicated to Mrs. Jordan the painful intelligence of the necessity by which he was constrained. In all things he has acted towards herself and their mutual family with exemplary liberality, and it is understood, that he still cherished her memory with esteem and affection.

Moreover, I confess myself one of those who do not think that the close of Mrs. Jordan's life was at all of that destitute kind which the world has been malignantly taught to believe. The disease of which this fascinating woman died, on the 3rd of July 1816, was itself of a kind calculated to produce excessive misery of mind in its progress, and the condition in which it may be said to have found her, was not only of her own choice but the result of advice. To her family, the reports abroad concerning her end must have been most afflicting, and yet it is impossible to discover in the real circumstances aught that should have wounded their feelings, or excited the sensibility of the

public. The tale, however, is a ravelled skein, and it has been doubly entangled by misrepresentation. Yet, in its leading circumstances, it possesses this redeeming quality, that she herself never complained of any injurious treatment from the Duke, but only from her own friends; nor did she conceive herself placed in such distress as to preclude the hope of being soon released from her difficulties. She died, it is true, in an unhappy crisis of her affairs, but the embarrassment was not of such a kind as might have not been, in a short time, surmounted.

More of calamitous accident certainly mingled with her latter days than might have been anticipated from her uniform train of good fortune, but still she can in no respect be considered as unfortunate, for though her lot, in the end, was embittered by mischances, over which no prudence could exercise a decided control, her greatest error was owing to her own easy good-nature and had its origin in kindness. All that related to herself was frank and above board, insomuch that her feminine frailties partook of the character of virtues; and it cannot be said that she was defective in more than one feminine grace, whilst she possessed many charms which those, proud of that solitary ornament, are often unambitious to acquire. In a word, she lived in a flutter, and died in vexation, but her life was untarnished as an actress by any extraordinary sorrow or stain.

Independent of her histrionic merits, Mrs. Jordan was justly entitled to be regarded as possessing great general talent. I have already mentioned her literary attainments; but it is chiefly to the stamina of her understanding that I allude. Though of an easy nature, and too prone to confide in those for whom she cherished friendship or esteem, she yet possessed no ordinary discernment in business. Tate Wilkinson says of her, in 1790, that, "at making a bargain, Mrs. Jordan is too many for the cunningest devil of us all." Nor ought I to omit, in summing up her character, when reflecting on the rank and consideration to which her family has been raised, that he also was prophetically happy in calling her "the lucky child of Fortune, lulled, caressed, and nursed in the lap of Nature."

## JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE.

THE Kemble dynasty is one of the most illustrious that has ever occupied the mimic throne. It succeeded the Cibber, but, in proportion as the genius of Mrs. Siddons excelled that of old Colley, so has the renown of her house transcended not only that of his, but of every other which the annals of the stage record. Next to the arch-empress\* of the drama, her brother, John Philip, is the most distinguished of all the histrionic princes of their line. He was born at Prescott, in Lancashire, on the 1st of February 1757.

His father being the manager of a respectable provincial company,

\* An epithet given by the Russians to Catherine II.

he was early introduced on the stage. On the 12th of February 1767, he performed at Worcester the part of the Duke of York, in Havard's *Charles the First*, a tragedy which, at that time, was not only popular but celebrated for its affecting pathos. How it should ever have been alleged that the father of Kemble never intended the stage for his profession is of no importance to ascertain ; in no other would he have been more eminent, and certainly his introduction upon the boards, at the age of ten, justifies the supposition that, if he had not been intended for a player, it was a strange oversight to awaken his dramatic taste so early.

From Worcester, where he attended a preparatory school, he was sent to the Roman Catholic charitable seminary at Sedgeley-park to complete his education, and he distinguished himself there by his diligence and proficiency, insomuch that it was resolved to send him to the English college at Douay, to qualify him for the church.

At Douay he acquired, besides the reputation of being a good scholar, distinction as a reciter of English poetry, and endeared himself to his companions by accepting the task of getting by heart two books of Homer, which had been imposed on his class as a vicarious atonement for some indiscretion. But, although his appearance at college was unquestionably highly to his credit, his mind had no inclination to the Church ; all his views and hopes were directed to the theatre, and accordingly, when he returned to England, he made his first professional appearance on the 8th of January, 1776, as Theodosius, at Wolverhampton.

There is no reason to believe that, in the beginning of his career, Kemble was particularly eminent ; but Boaden derides the attempts that have been made to attach to his history some of the old established anecdotes and expedients which tradition has amusingly ascribed to other players. He mentions, however, that while Kemble was little more than twenty, he had produced some dramatic pieces, subsequently played at York, Liverpool, and Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon oratory, sacred and profane, circumstances which sufficiently of themselves show a desire to acquire professional reputation.

From York he went to Wakefield, and made his first appearance, as Captain Plume, in the *Recruiting Officer*. This attempt, with the impression of his Coriolanus upon us, seems incredible ; but there have been real heroes who were once prankful cadets and feather-headed ensigns.

Though the necessities of the stroller's vocation obliged him to try his powers in all characters, Kemble's predilection was uniformly towards tragedy, and in the same year that he affected to do Archer he brought out his own tragedy of *Belisarius*, which at the time was deemed creditable to his efforts. On the 10th of April following, 1779, at York, he also brought out a comedy called *The Female Officer*, on which occasion Earl Percy formed his acquaintance, and continued to regard him with particular partiality during life.

An anecdote of him, at this period, is highly characteristic of the pride with which he sustained himself when he had established his fame in London,

During the performance of *Zenobia* the stage-box was occupied by a young lady of some consideration, but distinguished, as it would appear, by vulgarity and ill-breeding, which vented itself in loquacious and impertinent criticism. Towards the close of the last act she made herself audibly odious by her strictures on Kemble, and the actress with whom he was then performing; and he retaliated with looks of scorn that would have put to the blush one of less modesty. Instead, however, of repressing her impudence, his disdain was unmannerly answered with loud peals of laughter. Kemble suddenly stopped, and being called on by the audience to proceed, with great gravity and a bow to the damsel in the box, said, "I am ready to proceed with the play as soon as THAT lady has finished her conversation, which I perceive the going on with the tragedy only interrupts."

The audience vindicated themselves, and ordered the lady and her party as nuisances out of the theatre. I have not heard her name, otherwise I should have done all in my power to confer on her celebrity as long as these pages are likely to be read, for I can conceive no offence in manners equal to the audacity of a vulgar person presuming to insult the public.

The outrage did not, however, end with dismissing her from the theatre; Miss was, forsooth, offended, and with the despicable presumption that became one that could act with so little delicacy, she excited some poor fellows of the militia to demand reparation for her wounded feelings. They attempted to alarm the manager; but he did Kemble justice—who attended these individuals, and coolly refused to make any apology. The gallant officers returned to their Moll Flaggon with their fingers in their mouths, and reported how contemptuously they had been received. The audience had, in the mean time, determined to support Kemble, and John Bull loudly calling for him, with his wonted sweet voice, advised him to make no apology. But some of the lady's kith or kin told Kemble, who was then on the stage, to ask pardon.

"Pardon!" cried Kemble, "ask pardon! no, Sirs—NEVER!" and quitted the stage.

For several nights after, the same senseless and spiritless insolence persecuted him on the lady's account.—"Lady! marry come up!" But Kemble acted with a firmness that would have done honour to a nobler cause—if any cause can be more noble than that of resenting such audacity. This mighty madam was, after all but a Baronet's daughter.

In 1780, under the title of *Oh! it's Impossible!* Kemble brought out an alteration of *The Comedy of Errors*, in which, with some whimsicality, he puzzled the audience, as well as the dramatis personæ, by making the two Dromios black-a-moors; as if the humour of the piece did not depend on the audience being always sensible of the difference between them.

The fame of Kemble was now beginning to reach London; for, independent of his dramas, which, however, were not brilliant, his lectures on oratory served to obtain for him the respect of many within the York district of theatres, who went not to the play-houses,

In 1781, he performed Puff in *The Critic*, at Edinburgh, and afterwards he accepted an engagement at Dublin. Mrs. Jordan was then in the Irish metropolis, and known to the playgoers as Miss Francis; but all the party then in Dublin were eclipsed by Kemble.

From Dublin he went to Cork, where his reception was less splendid; the Corkers disputed the taste of the capital, and judged for themselves. He thence proceeded to Limerick, and in October 1782 returned to Dublin; but it was not until the summer of the following year that the superiority of his merit was determined by his being brought into comparison with Mrs. Siddons.

It was in this season that Miss Philips, afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Crouch, came to Dublin. Kemble became much attached to her, and would have married her had she permitted. The newspapers, however, which have at all times so much to say of the players that one is apt to imagine they are in their pay, had a great deal to do about this matter, and, among other things, gossiped till they were tired about an anecdote which must not be omitted.

Kemble and Miss Philips were at Cork, and he was intrusted by her father, who was ill of the gout, to see her home at night from the theatre till he should get better. One evening, some young officers of the garrison wishing to assume the honour, besieged her dressing-room door; she refused to go with them, but they would not leave the house without her. Kemble took his sword, and passing through them said,

“Gentleman, Mr. Philips, who is confined by illness, has requested me to conduct his daughter from the theatre; and as gentlemen I trust you will not molest her, for, be assured, I will maintain the trust reposed in me.” After delivering this heroic speech, he then called to her that her father would be anxious for her return; she at length ventured forth, but, seeing the officers, she would again have retired; Kemble, however, caught hold of her, and with his wonted solemnity and in his best buskins, said, “Be under no apprehension, I am resolved to protect you; if any gentleman is dissatisfied with my behaviour, I will meet him, if he pleases, to-morrow morning, if he can prove it to be wrong, I shall be ready to apologise for it.” It would have been more becoming, and a better reproof, had he called in the aid of the constables; but this flight of romance was attributed to love.

Kemble then went to London, and the 30th of September 1783, made his first appearance at Drury Lane theatre as Hamlet. It was always with him a favourite part, but his performance in the character, was pedantic,—more like a college-professor than a prince.

When he entered on the stage it is said that the spectators exclaimed, “How very like his sister!” and, as the performance proceeded, they thought his conception of the part original. It was undoubtedly so, for in the character there was more of John Philip Kemble than of Hamlet the Dane. He certainly recited the principal speeches with good emphasis, and looked the pantomime of the part with much intelligence; but there was an evident art throughout, and the impression on me was that of Kemble trying how Hamlet should be done. It was a great effort of a great artist,



but I could never discern aught in it save the rehearsal of an endeavour. He was to me the least satisfactory Hamlet I have ever seen, for he did and said some things so well that one was continually expecting when he would enter into the part. It was the most admirable piece of patch-work, art and nature that the stage could exhibit; for if the spectator fixed on particular points and called them excellent, ten to one they were so, and beautiful beyond praise, but the intermediate passages between one of these and the next of the same kind was "dowlas, filthy dowlas." I never saw Kemble's Hamlet without alternate feelings of admiration and disgust, nor left the theatre without being angry that one so able to do well should do so ill.

In my opinion he misconceived the character, and too uniformly sustained throughout the whole part the same melancholy mood which had invested him before the interview with the ghost; whereas the poet has clearly indicated that he should be sometimes different: indeed, Hamlet himself not only feigns distraction of mind after he has seen the ghost, but actually says aside to Horatio, in a passage to which the actors make Marcellus always an auditor:

*"Hamlet.* Once more remove, good friends."

The obvious action in saying this is, that Hamlet should take Horatio aside from Marcellus, and that the latter should observe to him,

*Horatio.* "Oh, day and night! but this is wondrous strange."

The Prince then replies, and evidently to Horatio only,

*"Ham.* And therefore, as a stranger, give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But, come,  
Swear as before, never, so help you mercy,  
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,  
(As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet  
To put an antic disposition on,)   
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,  
With arms encumbered thus, or this head-shake,  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase—  
As Well, we know,—or We could an if we would,—  
Or, If we list to speak,—or There may be an if there might,  
(Or such ambiguous giving out) denote  
That you know aught of me. This do ye swear.  
So grace and mercy, at your most need help you."

The whole of this passage is obviously a confidential exhortation to Horatio alone, for to Marcellus he resumes the same antic disposition in which he was found by the two friends after the ghost had disappeared. The passage quoted, instead of being delivered as it was by Kemble like earnest reasoning, should be uttered with a grieved and loaded heart. And the

*"Rest, rest, perturbed spirit,"*

is an apostrophe of a mind in extreme anguish. When this little apart scene with Horatio is over, I imagine, as the most natural course, that then Hamlet turned round to Marcellus, and again began in the affected craze with which he had previously shown himself,

“ So, gentlemen,  
With all my love I do commend me to you,” &c.

But particular criticism of this kind does not fall within the design and scope of this work ; on a part, however, so celebrated as that of Hamlet, and especially as it was performed by Kemble, I may hope for a little indulgence. Moreover, in this particular scene, as it affords a key to the whole character, for I conceive towards every other person but Horatio, Hamlet should from that time be seen infected with an “ antick disposition,” and that it is only in the soliloquies and when alone he is himself again. The text, indeed, in the last scene of the second act shows this, for from the interview after the disappearance of the Ghost, Hamlet is in his assumed madness ; in that fine soliloquy, however, he throws off his disguise. Kemble in this also erred, for when Hamlet says to the gentlemen with whom he had been talking,

“ Ay, so, God be wi’ you,”

it should have been uttered fantastically, and then he should have looked cautiously around, apprehensive of being observed, and after a pause said,

“ Now I am alone ;”

then, after a short meditation, begun,

“ O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I.”

The next scene in which he is in his natural character, is the famous soliloquy of

“ To be, or not to be ;”

he is then not aware of the eaves-droppers around him, but when Ophelia breaks in upon him he instantly passes from the pensive rumination in which he had been engaged, puts on his “ antick disposition,” and all his conversation is in his feigned character.

In the scene with the players, who are strangers, and not being members of the court, Hamlet bears him as comports with his dignity ; but when Polonius, Kosincerantz, and Guildenstern come in upon them, Hamlet again resumes his apparent insanity. They, however, no sooner retire and Horatio enters, than he is again himself, and speaks to him with the same sorrow and confidence that he had done in the former scene, and unlocks the cause of his hesitation, wishing human proof to convince him of his uncle’s guilt, and that it was not “ a damned ghost ” that they had seen.

In the scene with the play Hamlet is again plainly in disguise, but Horatio is in his confidence, and by him he is understood. Still apprehensive of being observed, he continues mystical, for some of the spectators at the play are still on the stage in the little scene which follows the play, but only part of what passes between Hamlet and Horatio should be in foolery.

The words of the Prince, “ Oh, good Horatio,” should be the commencement of some confidential conversation, in which they are interrupted by the entrance of Rosincrantz and Guildenstern, towards whom Hamlet again puts on his madness ; however, being

satisfied that it was no "damned ghost," and that the King is the murderer, he begins to act on the suggestion of the ghost.

I need not, however, pursue this analysis farther; it is clear that Shakespeare's Hamlet has two characters, first his own natural and gracious dispositions, and second, the artificial madness which he assumed after the interview with his father's spirit; but it always struck me as if Kemble attempted the part only as one, and that in this misconception lay the defect of his performance. In the rational and natural scenes Kemble was admirable, but in the affected insanity, to my taste, odious; and, therefore, I have ever been of opinion, that although the performance of certain passages was great, the performance of the whole character was, for a man of his discernment, marvellously deficient in discrimination.

Kemble's second part in London was Richard III. Boaden, his eulogist, acknowledges that it was not so striking as in his latter years. The truth is, that Kemble, with many noble external qualities for a great actor, was one of those men of genius who are always progressive till the wane of their faculties, and who, at two distant and different period of life, do not appear as the same individual. In Sir Giles Overreach, he was also not eminent when he first performed it, and in King John, which he undertook at the command of their Majesties, the audience considered him cold and artificial—a lay-figure.

But I do not propose to record all the characters which Kemble performed, because it can be of little use to the reader to receive merely a catalogue of parts. I would rather describe his merits, which were undoubtedly of a very high order, but it is a diseased swelling in truth to represent him supreme in all his parts.

One who has seen him on the stage says—"I saw him first in Glasgow, so long now that the period is beyond my recollection, and the part was Macbeth. His appearance I well remember, but I was greatly disappointed when he spoke, and I recollect two gross blunders, which, young as I was, I felt to be in the worst possible conception. The first was in the manner in which he uttered,

‘Wake, Duncan with this knocking.’

He really appeared to be in a towering passion, because Duncan slept too soundly; the other was in repeating—

‘To-morrow, and to-morrow.’

At which stately John appeared to be most absurdly angry; but when, years after, I saw him in London, he had corrected himself in both these points; he never became, however, thoroughly master of the part. The chiselling of the studio ever remained too conspicuous on the whole statue; but still there was no conception of the general idea he had formed as to how Macbeth should be played, nor in his own endeavours to embody it. Had I never seen him in Cardinal Wolsey, and above all, in Coriolanus, I must have estimated his talents and taste far under the standard of his admirers, and his power in delineating the nicer discrimination of the lines and shades of a part as not above mediocrity. His chief force was in his attitudes, and in that respect he was so excellent, that by his excellence, the

swarm of attitudinarians who have taken after his example, have introduced a species of action on the stage which has but a slight affinity to natural gesticulation."

The look of Kemble in pathetic parts was always touchingly beautiful; but sensible of his power in awakening tender sympathy, he often sustained the look too long, and was obliged in consequence, occasionally, to snivel, or snifter, one of the most disagreeable accidents that flesh is heir to; and when he did speak at last, he might as well have held his tongue, for the native infirmity of his voice became sepulchral. It was in his look and attitude that Kemble was great or tender; in the articulation of the sentiment he often failed. But let me not be misunderstood; because I would object to his general artificial manner, it is not to be imputed to me that I think mere nature should be the example, though it certainly ought to be the theme of acting. The object of the stage is to give pleasure, and to distill it from crimes and follies,—from actions that in real life would be hideous or contemptible. I do not therefore object to the principle of Kemble's action, for it was most judicious, but only to the execution, which was not so perfect as the conception. Acting should be to nature, what blank verse is to prose, a little more guarded and measured in its form, but still the same in language.

On the 8th December, 1787, Kemble was married. It was thought that in choosing his wife, he did not avail himself of his worldly advantages; but, notwithstanding that address, which was often visible in his professional pursuits, there was much native simplicity in his personal character; he was at the same time shrewd enough to perceive that he was only flattered by the great on account of his professional excellence, and that he had no hold of them as a man. It argues but a shallow knowledge of the world, when one, without connexions or fortune, mistakes the attentions paid to his professional attainments for that kind of friendship which only exists among equals.

Boaden's account of the wedding-day ought not to be omitted. They were married in the morning; Mrs. Bannister, who accompanied the bride to church, inquired where they intended to eat their wedding-dinner. Kemble, who had made no arrangement, replied he did not know; at home, he supposed. Upon this Mrs. Bannister said, if they would honour Mr. Bannister and herself, they would be gratified. Kemble assented, and an early dinner was prepared, for both Bannister and the bride were to act that evening. Kemble arrived tardily; they began to fear he would not come, and they were a little alarmed; at last, however, he was seen deliberately approaching the door, and good-humour revived. Soon after the cloth was removed the bride and Bannister went off to the theatre together, and the bridegroom remained amusing himself with the children, and conversing in his usual way, in a manner more after the fashion of the philosophers, than might have been expected from a player on such a joyous occasion. When it grew late he ordered a coach to take him to the theatre, from which he brought home his bride to the house in Caroline Street, Bedford Square, that had been prepared for her reception.

In the season of 1788-9, Kemble was appointed manager of Drury Lane. King had been his predecessor, but there was something behind the curtain which the public did not very well know, as the cause of his retiring, and Kemble was, seemingly, so forced into the situation of manager, that he deemed it advisable to address the public on the subject in consequence of what had been alleged.

"I find myself," said he, "arraigned by an anonymous letter, as having undertaken the management of Drury Lane theatre under humiliating restrictions. I do assure that writer and the public that no humiliation degrades my services to those who do me the honour to employ me; and that the power intrusted to me is perfectly satisfactory to my own feelings, and entirely adequate to the liberal encouragement of poets, of performers, and to the conduct of the business of the theatre.

"The public approbation of my humble endeavours in the discharge of my duty will be the constant object of my ambition; and as far as diligence and assiduity are claims to merit, I trust I shall not be found deficient.

"I am happy to add that I find myself most fairly and ably supported by the general zeal and exertions of a company of performers, so capable of making the stage a source of pleasure and amusement."

That during the time of Mr. Kemble's administration of the theatre a new era commenced is unquestionable. The scenery was rendered far more appropriate, and all the properties of the stage more splendid and suitable, to augment the illusions of the scene. While this taste was regulated by his excellent judgment of effect, it cannot be doubted that he was the parent of the modern improvements of the stage. At the same time it must be admitted that the tendency of these improvements has been to make the adjuncts of greater importance than the drama itself, and that often the audience is assembled more to witness the gorgeousness of the puppet-show, than to hear the poet's sentiment, or to enjoy the player's art.

Soon after Kemble had been promoted to the management of Drury Lane, he took, in conjunction with Mr. Aickin, the Liverpool theatre, and he was in the very depth of dramatic business, for about the same time he began the composition of a tragedy.

In 1789-90 Kemble took considerable interest in an event of that period, by which the public were greatly excited—the exhumation of Milton. A monument was intended to be raised to his memory in Cripplegate church, where he was interred, and it became in consequence, as it was supposed, necessary to ascertain exactly where the body lay; a search was accordingly instituted, and it was at last determined that the poet's relics were found. Two of the gentlemen engaged in the business repaired to the spot, and in vain endeavoured to discover an inscription on the leaden coffin, which was old and much corroded. They were, however, satisfied of the material fact, and retired, leaving the remains undisturbed, and directing the grave to be again closed. It was then the profanation commenced—a pawnbroker and a publican, belonging to the parish, resolved to see what could be seen, and brought out

the coffin to the light, which they rudely opened, and found the body enveloped in a shroud of many folds, which they disturbed, and broke the ribs that were still standing up within it. These miscreants then attempted to extract the teeth, and the pawnbroker attempted to purloin the whole lower jaw.

From their ravages the coffin passed into the custody of the sexton's female servant, who with the watchman, lighted candles and made a show of it, and absolutely sold the teeth and smaller bones, with the hair. A player of the name of Ellis was among the curious, and he bought some of the hair and one of the ribs, which he showed to Kemble. This hideous transaction had its natural effect on his sensibility; he went to examine the remains himself, and was inclined to believe that the body which had suffered this blasphemous exhumation was indeed that of the poet; but Steevens, the commentator of Shakspeare, examined the matter carefully, and there is still reason to hope that the body was not that of the sacred bard. But the incident is awful; the mere possibility of such a desecration taking place in one of the most civilized and Christian capitals of Europe is appalling, when we reflect that it was on the remains too of a poet only in estimation lower than the prophets of God.

On the 23rd of October 1790, Kemble retired from the management of Drury Lane theatre, and on the 10th of November he acted, for the first time in London, the part of Charles Surface in *The School for Scandal*. I consider this an important biographical fact, tending to show more of his natural character than transactions of far greater consequence; for in the whole range of the drama there is but one other, Sir Harry Wildair, that he was less fitted to sustain. Whatever Kemble attempted would be impressed with good sense, mingled with a flavouring of pedantry; but nevertheless there was always about him a stronger desire to excel than he had the power to execute—and the assumption of Charles Surface must be ascribed to this ambition. I remembered hearing a story reported of his being lectured in the street by some of the play-going critics for venturing the experiment.

An incident deserves to be mentioned at this time, though belonging more to the history of the stage than the biography of Kemble. On the 4th of June 1791, Drury Lane theatre was condemned and the fact was announced in a playful paragraph, which for its own spirit deserves preservation.

#### “THE DEATH OF OLD DRURY.

“On Saturday night, of a gradual decay, and in the 117th year of her age, died Old Madame Drury, who existed through six reigns, and saw many generations pass in review before her. She remembered Betterton in his declining age; lived in intimacy with Wilkes, Booth, and Cibber, and knew old Macklin when he was a stripling.

“Her hospitality exceeded that of the English character, even in its early days of festivity, having almost the whole of her life entertained from one to two thousand persons, of both sexes, six nights out of seven in the week. She was an excellent poetess, could be grave and gay by turns, and yet sometimes catching the disorder from intrusive guests, could be dull enough in all conscience.

“Her memory was most excellent, and her singing kept on in such a gradual state of improvement, that it was allowed her voice was better the three or four last years of her life, than when she was in her prime and at the latter end of the last century.

“She had a rout of nearly two thousand persons at her house the very night of her death, and the old lady found herself in such high spirits, that she said she would give them “no supper” without a “song,” which being complied with, she fell gently back in her chair, and expired without a groan.

“Dr. Palmer, (one of her family physicians), attended her in her last moments, and announced her dissolution to the company.”

In the course of the summer, Kemble made an excursion to France, in consequence of a severe illness of his brother Charles, then at the College of Donay, but they met on the road; and the manner in which they met is represented as having been characteristic of John’s peculiar humour. Without question, though his attainments were respectable, his character was in minor points strongly marked with singularities. In his younger years these may have originated in the desire of attracting public notice, but in after-life they certainly gave him a slight cast of eccentricity. I have already shown his temper on the stage, and his philosophical composure at his marriage—his visit to his brother was performed in the same spirit.

Being alone and reading in his carriage when that in which his brother was advancing, he was startled by the sound of the other, and, raising his eyes from the book, exclaimed “Charles.” A mutual recognition and a fraternal embrace was the consequence, and Kemble, who is said to have never been an inquisitive traveller, then coolly re-embarked in the same carriage with his brother, and returned with him to England.

Such quiet self-possession was, no doubt in some degree natural to Kemble, and must have been highly useful to him in his profession; but, like many others, aware of their peculiarities, he probably sometimes indulged himself in it for momentary amusement, and to give matter for conversation, even while he felt more than he affected to feel.

But injustice would be done to Kemble in the subsequent transactions connected with the management of the theatre, were it not recollected that with whatever coolness he went through his duties, he had, in the peculiarities of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, to encounter no inconsiderable obstacles.

Kemble did not find his situation a happy one as manager of Drury Lane theatre. His aim was to exalt the renown of the stage. Sheridan cared less for its reputation, and became a leading politician, and weekly made the drama subservient to political patronage. Kemble saw this, and was with difficulty persuaded to remain as manager; for the affairs of the house were conducted without reference to his judgment, which he felt was undervalued. In the management of the course he adopted to obtain release from this thralldom, much of his peculiar character was displayed.

When he had resolved to retire from the management of Drury

Lane, there was a supper of some of the principal performers ; Sheridan was expected after the rising of the House of Commons, and Kemble, with an inarticulate murmur, as it has been happily called, alarmed the company with the prospect of a scene. At length Sheridan arrived, looked kindly at Kemble, but the mimic monarch retained his state, and churmed his cherished wrath loud enough to be heard, then, rising, he astonished the senator and all present with a speech "in Ercoles' vein :"—

"I am," said he, "an eagle whose wings have been bound down by frosts and snows, but now I shake my pinions and cleave into the general air unto which I am born."

He then deliberately resumed his seat, and was again magnificently sullen. Sheridan, with his usual perspicacity looked into the eagle's heart, and shifting his seat to the eagle's side, soon whispered him into good-humour and their differences were adjusted. The mock heroics of the theatre, however amusing to the general reader, are to the beings of that element stupendously solemn ; the bombast of Kemble's speech has been deemed Shakespearian !

It would be to omit an incident at once characteristic of the taste and feeling of Kemble, not to notice that on the 24th of January 1793, when the tidings of the execution of Louis XVI. reached London, he closed the theatre.

Boaden speaks of Kemble as being averse to those melodramatic exhibitions which were imported from the Germans, and that "he did his utmost to keep down this rage after novelty, but he found it beyond his power." In this a compliment is paid to his taste at the expense of his judgment, for he ought to have discerned in what way the current ran, and directed its tendency into a proper channel, especially when it was confessedly too strong to be resisted. The interest which the dramas of Germany excited in the British public might have been better gratified by procuring good translations of the plays of her great authors, than by ministering, with her "two-penny trash," to the flagrant feelings and audacious passions of the galleries. Kemble was sensible a change had come over the popular taste, and that the hideous events of the French revolution had whetted a morbid craving and appetite for suppers of horror. Had he really possessed that philosophic judgment which has been ascribed to him, instead of allowing the stage to be usurped by the base and coarse of German genius, he would himself have led the way by the exhibition of her noblest productions. But he really himself was very culpable in accelerating the progress of the melodramatic epidemic. Under a judicious adaptation, would not *The Robbers* have been a far richer entertainment than such Bedlamitic stuff as *The Mountaineers*? It is, indeed, in vain to say that Kemble understood the taste of the time, when he kept back words of genius and permitted from the same school rant and bombast disgusting to every judicious spectator. It is not too harsh to say that Kemble opposed the German theatre and countenanced the German booth, not intentionally, but by not availing himself of the sublime productions which the former afforded, and allowing the offal from the bloody shambles of the latter to disgrace his stage.



Indeed, if Mr. Boaden reports his opinions aright, Kemble must have had both a narrow conception of the power of genius, and an erroneous idea of what the age required, for he makes him say, that "at Drury Lane theatre they did not want plays, the treasures of our ancient authors were unexhaustible; showy after-pieces and laughable farces might be necessary, but what could be expected now in the way of the regular drama that previously had not been better done?" It is to be feared that this is a stock opinion in the green-room, and will be ever productive to the marring of public pleasure, till some manager has the good sense not to allow the stage to be made an arena for actors to compete with each other in the same parts: the public are no longer invited to see new works of genius, but to determine whether Miss This is greater than Mrs. That in certain stock-characters in which Mrs. That was decidedly greater than Miss This. The dogma goes, in fact, to close the stage against the essays of modern genius, and to substitute a comparison between the merits of actors. There are, no doubt, vast treasures of ancient dramatic composition on the shelves of the libraries; but there they ever rest, because it does not suit the theatres to employ adequate talent to adapt them to the change that has taken place in the public taste since they were first written. The misfortune of the stage at present is, that the players, who are seldom eminently qualified by any particular advantages for the task, arrogate to themselves the characters of literary critics, and determine what the town shall receive from them, as if the faculty of judiciously reciting the poet's composition qualified them in any superior degree to decide concerning its merits.

On the 21st of April 1794, the superb pile which had been erected on the site of old Drury Lane theatre, was opened for the regular drama by Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, as Macbeth and his tremendous lady. The edifice itself, though never completed, gratified the pride of the people both by its size and magnificence, and the performance of the tragedy surpassed both in the talent of the actors and the splendour of the scene all that had ever been exhibited on the English stage.

On the 2nd of April 1796, the famous forgery of *Vortigern*, by young Ireland, was acted and condemned. That it was so justly has never been disputed, but considered as the work of a boy, it is an extraordinary production.

The private manners of Kemble were essentially tragic. The Parisians wondered at his talent for silence. To them he appeared thoughtful and reserved, but they admired the statuary gracefulness of his manners.

During the season that Master Betty was the fashion, Kemble prudently made no attempt to resist the headlong rush of the town. It was frequently alleged at the time, that he considered the talents of that intelligent boy with jealousy! He had too much good sense; for he could not but see that Betty acted from being taught how, and had no conception in his own mind of the characters he undertook. He was but a clever automaton, a thing that worked well under the direction of others. As a child he was surprising but as an

actor, with those who did perform from their own conceptions, he was not even mediocre.

One who saw Kemble in the winter, in *Coriolanus*, I believe 1806-7, says: "Had he only acted in that character he would have been deemed the very greatest male actor ever seen; it was in all points of conception, look, and utterance, equal to the *Lady Macbeth* of Mrs. Siddons. In no other part whatever, did he, or could he attain equal eminence. In every other, as compared with his masterful energy in this noble creation of the poet, he was only secondary.

"I frequently saw him in *Coriolanus*, but I happened not to be present when the apple fell on the stage between him and *Volumnia*, a part which Mrs. Siddons sustained with all her wonted dignity. This incident of the apple gave rise to one of those occasional scenes, in which Kemble displayed his overcharged self-possession, and rendered the occurrence so important, to those who witnessed it, as to give it the impression of an event. At the moment when *Volumnia* is supplicating her son, the conqueror, to spare her country, the apple fell between them; taking up the missile with all the dignity of the character, he advanced, *Coriolanus*-like, to the front of the stage, and addressed the audience as follows"—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I have been many years acquainted with the benevolence and liberality of a London audience; but we cannot proceed this evening with the performance, unless we are protected, especially when ladies are thus exposed to insult."

A person in the gallery called out "We can't hear."

Kemble replied indignantly,

"I will raise my voice, and the galleries shall hear me."

"This protection is what the audience owe it to themselves to grant; what the performers, for the credit of their profession, have a right to demand, and what I will venture so far to assert, that, on the part of the proprietors, I here offer a hundred guineas to any man who will disclose the ruffian who has been guilty of this act.

"I throw myself, ladies and gentlemen, upon the high sense of breeding that distinguishes a London audience; and I hope I shall never be wanting in my duty to the public; but nothing shall induce me to suffer insult."

In this little affair, the true spirit of Kemble was fully illustrated. There was that skinless sensibility which rendered him on all occasions so acute to the very shadow of affront. For the scene was always listened to with silence and awe, such as ever attended the united efforts of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, and certainly it might have occurred to him, that the sudden appearance of the apple was not intended as a personal insult to either, and did not justify so much ado about nothing. It was indeed an accident; for the apple was not thrown at the performers, but at some disorderly females in the boxes, and only by chance fell upon the stage.

On the 20th September 1808, *Covent-Garden* was destroyed by fire but Kemble sustained this vast misfortune, the loss of his whole property and the suspension of his profession, with great equanimity. Boaden has described with no inconsiderable force, the scene in his dressing-room when he visited him.

"In the morning after the fire, as soon as I had breakfasted, I hastened to Great Russell Street, to ascertain the state of the sufferers, and to give any little aid that I might be able to render. Honest John Rousham in silence let me in, and walked up-stairs before me into Mr. Kemble's dressing-room. He was standing before the glass, totally absorbed, and yet at intervals endeavouring to shave himself.

"Mrs Kemble was sitting, in tears, on a sofa, and on seeing me exclaimed, 'Oh Mr. Boaden, we are totally ruined, and have the world to begin again.'

"His brother Charles, wrapt up just as he had come from the fire, was sitting attentive upon the end of the sofa; and a gentleman much attached to Mr. Harris, who in and about the theatre was familiarly styled 'old Dives,' with his back to the wall and leaning upon his cane, sat frowning in a corner. It was not a situation that called for a speech; our salutations were like those at a funeral. I took a chair, and sat observing the manner and the look of Kemble. Nothing could be more natural than for Mrs. Kemble to feel and think of their personal loss in this dreadful calamity. Her husband, I am convinced, while I saw him, never thought of himself at all. His mind was rather raised than dejected, and his imagination distended with the pictured detail of all the treasures that had perished in the conflagration. At length he broke out in exclamation which I have preserved as characteristic of his turn of mind.

"'Yes, it has perished, that magnificent theatre, which, for all the purposes of exhibition or comfort, was the first in Europe. It is gone, with all its treasures of every description, and some which can never be replaced. That library which contained all those immortal productions of our countrymen, prepared for the purposes of representation! The vast collection of music composed by the greatest geniuses in that science—by Handel, Arne, and others; most of it manuscript in the original score! That wardrobe, stored with the costumes of all ages and nations, accumulated by unwearied research and at incredible expense! Scenery, the triumph of the art, unrivalled for its accuracy, and so exquisitely finished, that it might have been the ornament of your drawing-rooms, were they only large enough to contain it! Of all this vast treasure, nothing now remains, but the arms of England over the entrance of the theatre, and a Roman eagle standing solitary in the market-place.'

On this disastrous occasion, several of the friends of Kemble came forward with their assistance in the most munificent manner. His late Majesty George IV. was among the earliest, and the late Duke of Northumberland in the handsomest manner offered a loan of £10,000.

In the course of a few days, the Opera-house was prepared for the reception of the Covent Garden company, who commenced a series of performances there till the end of the season, while another theatre on the site of the old one was erecting on a more magnificent scale; but the templar exterior of that edifice is a disgrace to the taste alike of the architect and the managers, and the less said about it as a building the better.

The day on which the foundation stone of the theatre was laid,

was distinguished by an act of princely munificence towards Mr. Kemble by the Duke of Northumberland. The proprietors and their friends dined together, and Kemble rose with a letter in his hand which he had that moment received from the Duke. It noticed the business of the day, as rendering it one of the proudest in Mr. Kemble's life, and conveyed his Grace's determination to make it one of the happiest; and, as no doubt the joy of all concerned would demand and justify a bonfire on the occasion, he begged that Mr. Kemble would use the inclosed to light the pile. It was his bond for ten thousand pounds cancelled.

But, perhaps, the most remarkable circumstance connected with the re-building, after this magnificent incident, was the O. P. war, a series of tumults which lasted for sixty-eight consecutive nights, between the proprietors and the public, chiefly in its fury directed against Kemble, as if he, who was only one of the proprietors, had been himself the cause of the attempt to raise the prices, an attempt which the public resisted. The details of this systematic riot are not worthy of more circumstantial notice, but throughout them the pertinacity of Kemble's perseverance to enforce the will of the proprietors on the people, had more of obstinacy than of firmness, and evinced more of that self-will which was the characteristic of his temper, than the practical wisdom which it was frequently said he possessed in an eminent degree.

The treaty of peace and the whole ceremony of the negotiation between the belligerents are worthy of place in the history of England, so happily do they serve to illustrate the spirit and manners of the age. Mr. Clifford, a barrister, the most distinguished chieftain of the rioters, had been given into the custody of a constable by one of the servants of the theatre, and in consequence he brought an action for the injury, and obtained from a special jury a verdict of damages of five pounds; immediately after which, to celebrate their success in the war, the O.P.'s advertised a public dinner to take place, and all who disapproved of the conduct of the managers and proprietors of the theatre were invited; Mr. Clifford was to be in the chair. The company consisted of about three hundred persons, and after the King's health, Mr. Clifford stated that he had that morning received a message from Mr. Kemble, expressing a great desire to attend the meeting could he be assured of civil treatment. Mr. Clifford, as their Chairman, then said, that he had ventured to assure him of such a reception as one gentleman ought to receive from others; and if supported in this pledge, he would immediately invite Mr. Kemble, who was in the house to meet them. The proposition was unanimously acceded to. Kemble then entered, was received with as much applause as ever attended his finest efforts on the stage, and was seated in a chair on the right hand of the Chairman, who again addressed the meeting, and stated that Mr. Kemble had expressed himself sincerely sorry for the interruption of that good understanding which had ever existed between the public and the stage. He had also, on the part of himself and the other proprietors, expressed a strong desire to do every thing in their power to conciliate the public, and restore that unison of feeling which had heretofore been so common between them,

In the mean time a Committee had retired from the hall to draw up the treaty, and soon after they returned with it in the shape of the following Resolutions, which were then read from the Chair.

"We presume that the public will be satisfied with these, if acceded to on the part of the proprietors this evening, viz.

"I. That the private boxes shall be reduced to the same state as they were in the year 1802.

"II. That the Pit shall be three shillings and sixpence, and the Boxes seven shillings.

"III. That an apology shall be made on the part of the proprietors to the public, and Mr. Brandon shall be dismissed." [He was the person who gave Mr. Clifford into custody.]

"IV. That all prosecutions and actions on both sides shall be quashed."

The Resolutions were severally put, and adopted almost unanimously. The chairman then proposed a toast:—

"May this day's meeting produce a reconciliation between the managers of Covent Garden theatre and the public, equally advantageous to both!" and it was drunk with three cheers.

Mr. Kemble then rose, and said,

"Gentlemen,

"Before I withdraw for the purpose of making the necessary preparations for stating the arrangement that has taken place in to-morrow's newspapers, I beg leave to express my hope, which I do from the bottom of my heart, that the propositions now agreed to will lay the foundation of a lasting good understanding between the public and the theatre; I have also to return you personally my best thanks for the kind and polite treatment I have received since I came into this room."

Mr. Kemble then retired.

A transaction of this kind has no parallel in the annals of any other kingdom, and although no possible excuse can be made for the proprietors resisting the public will so long, still the affair itself merits to be ever quoted as an instance of the good sense and resolution of the British public. Doubts have been thrown out of the prudence of the Government in permitting the tumults to rage in the theatre so long as sixty-eight nights, but on few occasions have popular feeling been so wisely considered, or the freedom of the people more judiciously indulged.

The tumult at the theatre was that night of a more mitigated description, in consequence of the dinner at the Crown and Anchor, and the interruptions during the play proceeded only from communications made almost every minute from the town to the pit; at length the cry of "Mr. Kemble" was heard, and he made his appearance as he came from the camp of the enemy. Silence being procured, he addressed the audience.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I ask a thousand pardons for presuming to appear before you in

a dress so little suitable to the very high respect which I feel, and which it is my anxious wish ever to show in this place ; it is entirely owing to the circumstance of my not being apprised that I should have the honour of appearing before you this night. Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been with the company of gentlemen who have dined together at the Crown and Anchor tavern, where a set of propositions were submitted to us for consideration, and to which the proprietors have agreed. The first proposition is, that the boxes should continue at seven shillings, that the pit should be lowered to the old price, and that the tier of private boxes should be restored to the public at the end of the present season. And, Ladies and Gentlemen, that no trace or recollection of the unfortunate differences which have unhappily prevailed so long should remain, I am further to say, that we most sincerely lament the course that has been pursued, and we engage that all legal proceedings shall forthwith be put a stop to on the part of the proprietors ; I pledge myself that instructions to that effect shall be given immediately. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I retire give me leave to express my most lively sense—" Here a tumult arose, and he made his bow and retired.

But peace was not yet proclaimed ; Kemble either forgot or intentionally omitted the condition with respect to Mr. Brandon, and the tempest again rose. At last Munden appeared with Brandon to read an apology, but he was assailed with all sorts of missiles from the pit, and compelled to withdraw ; another attempt by the son of Mr. Harris was made in favour of Brandon, but the answer was " He must be dismissed."

On the following evening all things denoted the renewal of hostilities, and Kemble again came forward and said,

" Ladies and Gentlemen,

" Having had the misfortune to incur the displeasure, Mr. Brandon has withdrawn himself from the office of the box-book and housekeeper to the theatre."

But this was not enough. The proprietors had attempted to equivocate with the public, and the O. P.'s in their indignation insisted that a specific apology should be made for the employment of the boxers to coerce them, for such had been the case. And Kemble immediately came forward and spoke to the following effect :

" I understand your displeasure now arises, gentlemen, that an apology has not been made for the introduction of improper persons to this theatre. I ask your pardon for not having made it sooner ; and I now in my own name, and on the part of the proprietors, most humbly apologise for the same ; we are very sorry for what is passed, and beg leave to assure you that inclination and duty will alike render it our first pride, for the time to come, to prevent any thing of the kind from occurring again."

Kemble was here cheered by an universal huzza, and the O. P.'s, in anticipation of their victory, had come prepared with a large placard, which they hoisted in the pit with the words inscribed

" We are satisfied."

Thus terminated that memorable war, in which John Bull was right from the beginning, and the proprietors in the end justly punished. They held a monopoly, and in consequence, the consent of the public to the increase of price and the change in the form of the theatre, was a fit and becoming subject to be submitted to their consideration. But the perseverance in an obstinate refusal for sixty-eight nights, deserves a hard epithet, for be it remembered that the course adopted by the theatre, had no less a tendency than to deprive the public of their amusement; for, by the pretensions forced on their patients, it was supposed that the proprietors had a right to interdict the erection of new theatres; and, of course, that it was in their power to do what they attempted.

Peace had scarcely been established, when discord again threw her apple on the stage. In the performance of Prospero in *The Tempest*, Mr. Kemble amazed the critics by an attempt to introduce a new reading of the word *aches*—calling the plural *aitches* in the following passage,

“If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly  
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps;  
Fill all thy bones with *aches*; make thee roar,  
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.”

It is inconceivable what a stir this innovation made at the time. Kemble defended himself in the following letter.

“My dear Sir,

“I never do pronounce the word *aches* in two syllables, (like the word *aitches*,) but when the metre of a verse (that is, but when the measure of the poetry or verse) requires it.

“The old pronunciation of the word *aches* in two syllables is so entirely laid aside in common conversation, and in all modern use, that it would be ridiculous indeed, to use it familiarly, and idle to attempt its revival in poetical composition: yet when the word occurs as a dissyllable in our elder poets it must be so pronounced; because in a metrical work the metre must be observed.

“These lines are in Pope's *Essay on Man*,

‘Ask of thy mother-earth why oaks are made,  
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade!  
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,  
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove.’

“The word *satellites* is now-a-days pronounced in three syllables, and a man must be a coxcomb to affect to pronounce it otherwise; but it was pronounced as four in Mr. Pope's time, and he employs it as four, and a man would be thought very ignorant, who in reciting Pope's lines, would destroy their metre by giving this word its modern pronunciation. If the old use and pronunciation of the word *aches* can be decided by authority, I should think Baret, in his “*Alvea* ic,” fol. 1580, conclusive on this question.

“‘The *ache* or payne of body or mind, etc.

“‘To have *ache*, payne, or griefe, etc. vide *ake*. And under *ake*, to which the reader is referred, *ake* is the verbe of this substantive *aches*, ch be turned into k, etc.’

"So that it appears that anciently the monosyllabic pronunciation distinguished the verb and substantive.

"I beg pardon for taking up your time with so much of this uninteresting matter.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours, truly,

"J. P. KEMBLE."

This appears a very unsatisfactory defence, a lame and impotent conclusion. What is the authority for the pronunciation of satellites, as given in four syllables in Pope's time? He might as well have stated that Charles was always pronounced as two syllables, merely because in Charles's time it was customary to use it so when in the genitive. From that example it may as fairly be inferred that in the passage quoted, Jove's was pronounced as two syllables, as that satellites was in four. It is not so long ago since it was the custom to say of an individual's property, *his* property: as William Shakspeare *his* plays.

The friends of Kemble took a part in this important controversy, and Hudibras was quoted as a proof of the accuracy of his taste.

"Can by their pains and *aches* find  
All turns and changes of the wind."

But these erudite personages forgot that Hudibras was composed two ages after *The Tempest*, and at most it could only be allowed that Butler used the word as it was found to be used there. Nothing, therefore, can be deduced as to the pronunciation of *aches* in Shakspeare's time by the fashion of a subsequent pronunciation. To prove that Kemble was correct, examples should be found of the manner in which it was used before *The Tempest* was written.

It has now long been an ascertained fact, that many of the corruptions of Shakspeare's text are printers' errors; for example: Macbeth's ravelled sleeve of care should be ravelled skein; the former being nonsense, and the latter a "household word." In this case of the *aches*, the monosyllable *and* has probably been omitted, and instead of reading *aitches* to fill up the measure of the verse it should be read thus:

"If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly  
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps;  
Fill all thy bones with *aches*, AND make thee roar,  
That beasts shall tremble at thy din."

A change which not only gets rid of the dispute, but makes better sense and smoother verse.

From this time Kemble's professional career was not distinguished by any remarkable event. He continued to enjoy the esteem of the public, both on account of his merits as an actor and a man, but he suffered severely from his gout, and withdrew partly in consequence for about two years from the stage. On the 15th of January 1814, he returned, no longer, however, as one of the company, but as a star, to shine a limited number of nights, and all his subsequent engagements were of the same character.



In 1817 he visited Edinburgh, and took leave of the Scottish public in an address written by Sir Walter Scott ; and on the 23rd of June, in the same year, he acted for the last time in London, and took leave of the public in his greatest part, *Coriolanus*. On this occasion he received a compliment to the undecayed energy of his powers in a cry from the pit of no farewell ; but he, nevertheless, came forward and said,

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

“I have now appeared before you for the last time. This night closes my professional life.

“I am so much agitated that I cannot express with any tolerable propriety what I wish to say. I feared, indeed, that I should not be able to take my leave of you with sufficient fortitude—composure I mean—and had intended to withdraw myself before you in silence ; but I suffered myself to be persuaded that, if it were only from old custom, some little parting word would be expected from me on this occasion. Ladies and Gentlemen, I entreat you to believe, that whatever abilities I have possessed, either as an actor in the performance of the characters allotted to me, or as a manager, in endeavouring at a union of propriety and splendour in the representation of our best plays, and particularly of those of the divine Shakspeare,—I entreat you to believe, that all my labours, all my studies, whatever they have been, have been made delightful to me by the approbation with which you have been pleased constantly to reward them.

“I beg you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to accept my thanks for the great kindness you have invariably shown me, from the first night I became a candidate for public favour, down to this painful moment of my parting with you ! I must take my leave at once. Ladies and Gentlemen, I most respectfully bid you a long and an unwilling farewell.”

A few days after, a public dinner was given to him by a numerous body of his friends and admirers. The chair was filled by Lord Holland, with Mr. Kemble on his right, and the Duke of Bedford on his left. After dinner it was announced that the players intended to present him with an elegant vase ; and an ode written for the occasion by the author of “*The Pleasures of Hope*,” was recited which, however, was not in the happiest vein of that poet’s elegant genius.

There was but little to add to these few sketches. Mr. Kemble soon after retired, on account of the state of his health, to the South of France, and fixed his residence at Toulouse, from which, after several seasons, he was induced to move to Switzerland, whence he was suddenly summoned to London by the death of Mr. Thomas Harris, his co-proprietor in the theatre. On this occasion he made over his share of the theatre to his brother Charles, and returned to Lausanne. From Lausanne he made an excursion into Italy ; at Rome, however, his health became so impaired that his physician ordered him back to Switzerland, but though his symptoms for a time were flattering, he died on the 26th of February 1823, in the sixty-sixth year of his age.

That the professional talent of Mr. Kemble was of the most splendid kind, and that, by his gentlemanly conduct through life, he reflected honour on his profession, are two points of no controversy. Objection may be taken, perhaps, to the first, arising from a natural weakness in his voice, and something not regularly clear in the conception of particular passages in some of his great parts, but still all his contemporaries will agree that he left but little to be desired to complete his excellence. It may, in like manner, be objected to his private manners that they were tinged with affectation; but it ought to be remembered that Kemble was one of those occasional men on whom Nature bestows singular endowments, and what, in ordinary men, would have been called affectation, in him probably proceeded from the peculiar feelings connected with his greater qualities. In literary reputation he is below Garrick, and his compositions for the theatre are not distinguished by any brilliancy. On the contrary, some of them may, hereafter, tend to dim the splendour of his professional fame.

But, in one respect, he ought ever to be regarded as one to whom the British stage is under the greatest obligations. Before his time exactness, in all the circumstances of the scene, was not a primary object of solicitude with the manager; but in many of his representations, we have seen this fulfilled, and learning guiding taste even to the minutest article of furniture and ornament. Had he possessed no other merit than what belongs to him from this source, he must still have been esteemed as one of the most eminent contributors to the innocent enjoyments of a polished people. Of his private worth it is unnecessary to speak; the affection with which he was regarded by his friends is the best of all testimonies.

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## JOHN EMERY.

THE players most in estimation for the regularity of their private lives afford little matter for biography, and show, were proof wanting, that the profession is not in fault for those eccentricities of conduct, which, by the austere and illiberal, are considered necessarily inseparable from a player's life. In all his domestic relations, Mr. Emery has been uniformly spoken of with respect, and in the several duties which appertained to his sphere as a subject, he equalled not merely his friends, but was exemplary in his class, affording another instance, that however brilliant in adventure and character the actor may appear on the stage, owing to the variety of parts he performs, there is no obligation imposed on him to deviate from the proprieties which belong to his private station in society.

He was born at Sunderland, county of Durham, 1777, and received the rudiments of his education at Ecclesfield, where he acquired that use of the Yorkshire dialect which in his riper years was esteemed one of his greatest accomplishments, as the representative

of clowns and grooms, and the various modifications of the rustic character. When he first imbibed a predilection for the stage is impossible to be determined, for it may be said of him that he was born behind the scenes, his father and mother being both actors of provincial celebrity.

He was originally designed for a musician, and, when only twelve years of age, was engaged at the Brighton theatre as performer in the orchestra. But, as his taste attached him more to the boards, he studied the part of Old Crazy, the bellman, in the farce of *Peeping Tom*, and made his debut in that character with great applause; his imitation of the imbecile gait and tremulous accent of age giving a high assurance of future eminence.

For two or three years subsequent, his apprenticeship to Thespis was served in the country theatres of Kent and Sussex, sharing the good and evil fortune of the ordinary stroller's life, from the vicissitudes of which, being "to the manner born," he suffered probably less in those acute inconveniences which so molest the other ill-starred heroes of the sock and buskin. At fifteen he obtained an engagement in the York company, under Tate Wilkinson, who has made himself more celebrated by his memoirs and as the wandering patentee, than when he was in the full possession of his fame as a mimic and an actor.

In the circuit which the York manager went with his company, Emery became popular, and it is no improbable conjecture to suppose that he observed the local manners narrowly, and with considerable discrimination. In the parts of old men he was always distinguished, and in that class of characters obtained the favour of the London managers; but even while there could be no doubt of his ability in them, perhaps the public judged as wisely of his talents, when it preferred him in exhibitions of honesty, simplicity, and rustic roguery.

At the age of twenty-one he came to London with a reputation which, even at that early period, was in a great measure fixed. His scope was very circumscribed, and not susceptible of much enlargement, but it was of a rare kind, and deservedly welcomed.

He came out at Covent Garden theatre in the season of 1798, as Frank Outlands in *A Cure for the Heart Ache*, and of Lovegold in *The Miser*, in both of which characters he established himself at once in the good opinion of the audience. But the applause he received during the performance ought, perhaps, to be ascribed more to the generosity of the public to encourage the talent which they saw he possessed, than to admiration at the excellence of his acting; at least, I think that in neither of these parts was he seen to so much advantage as in many others. That he looked and dressed Frank Outlands with the correctest judgment cannot be disputed, but the dialogue of the part is in some places mawkish, and, in my humble opinion, he attempted to make too much of it. To those, however, who admired Morland the painter's fac-similes of hogs and boors, his personation must have been justly esteemed a chef-d'œuvre, but as I am not of the number, my criticism must be taken with due allowance; I say so frankly, for I wish to speak well of peculiar merits, although I

never liked them. In Lovegold he affected a hoarseness that was to me positively painful to hear, and though it was impossible to withhold the tribute of approbation to the judgment with which he conceived the part, still it was a rigid and a rusty performance. He moved in it as if his joints had been as stiff as the hinges on the seldom-opened coffers of avarice, and his voice had a grudging croak that might, for aught I know, have been appropriate; but surliness is not a miser's vice; the actuating passion prompts to conciliation, for it is afraid of the world, and is, in consequence, oftener met with clothed in gentleness craftily blended with simplicity.

His Caliban, in which his sore-throat rhetoric was still more apparent, was any thing but the poetical monster of Shakspeare. It is, however, a part that must with every actor be a failure, and the better it is done the more so. There are limits to the range of things which may be represented on the stage, and *The Tempest* and *The Midsummer's Night Dream* are both dramas of this kind.

Tyke, in *The School of Reform*, was, perhaps, Emery's ablest part; no character could be more energetically performed; it was, if excellence can be spoken of as a fault, too violent; for the dreadful feeling he infused into it could not be witnessed without pain far beyond what the drama should ever attempt to inflict. It lacked of the temperance and smoothness of passion requisite to give pleasure; never was the frenzy of guilt and remorse so truly exhibited; it was a very whirlwind and hurricane of the soul; and few tragedies have ever drawn more tears. It is this single character that entitles Emery to the epithet of a great performer; nothing could be finer than his low cunning during the profligacy of Tyke, save only the pathos and storm of his grief and remorse. I saw it once, and I have read *The Robbers* of Schiller once, protect me from knowing them again; but I am safe, Emery is gone, and Morton's text affords no adequate idea of his vehemence.

It were useless to speculate on the excellence to which Emery, had he lived, might have attained in parts of that kind. The drama has few of them, but, undoubtedly, all his merits in simple and comic characters shrink into insignificance compared with the tremendous energy of which he showed himself possessed, in those peals of terror more dreadful than thunder, which Tyke launches in his despair.

To the duties of his profession, Emery was an example to his brethren; he never, on any occasion but when suffering from severe indisposition, absented himself from the theatre, and was always master of his part. He had some talent in writing songs in the Yorkshire dialect, was a pleasant companion, and in drawing he was so accomplished, that had he not made the stage his profession, he was undoubtedly qualified to have risen to eminence as an artist with his pencil. But he fell prematurely, the victim of a gradual decay of Nature, I believe, in consequence of having ruptured a blood-vessel, on the 25th of July, in the forty-fifth year of his age, leaving a widow and seven children to deplore his early doom. To them the players, however, generously did all they could to mitigate so great a misfortune, and the contributions to raise a fund for their support did honour alike to the fraternal spirit of the profession and to humanity.

## MRS. SIDDONS.

"PITY it is that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution cannot, like those of poetry, be their own record! that the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath and motion that presents them; or at best can but imperfectly glimmer through the memory of a few surviving spectators;" says Colley Cibber, and who, that remembers the triumphs of Mrs. Siddons, can withhold amen to these beautiful expressions of regret. Had I indulged my own feelings, I should not have attempted any portrait of her character here, for she still lives, and I have received such exquisite delight from her personations, that it would seem a sordid ingratitude to say aught of her susceptible of being constructed to imply any sentiment but admiration. Could it, however, be imagined that a collection of the Lives of Players would be acceptable without some account of this sublime actress? Or that any one who has enjoyed the Avatar of such perfection should not desire to tell posterity how much they have missed.

Mrs. Siddons, the daughter of Roger Kemble and Sarah Ward his wife, was born at Brecknock, in South Wales, in the year 1755. As they were players, and her father the manager of a company, she was introduced in childhood on the stage. An anecdote of her earliest performance, considered in connection with her subsequent fame, possesses peculiar beauty. The family, at the time, were in such pressing circumstances as rendered their benefit important, and the child to stimulate curiosity, was brought forward in some juvenile part. The taste of the audience was, however, offended at her extreme youth, and the house was so shaken with uproar, that the young Melpomene, in alarm, was bashfully retiring, when her mother rushed forward, and, with that intellectual dexterity for which so many of her family have been distinguished, led her to the front of the stage, and made her repeat the fable of THE BOYS AND FROGS, so appropriate to the occasion, that the audience at once applauded, admiring alike the mother's address and the elocution of the child.

In her thirteenth year, Mrs. Siddons was the heroine in some of the standard English operas, and sang the airs incidental to the parts with a degree of vocal elegance, seldom heard among the migratory nightingales of Thespis. In her fifteenth year, a mutual passion arose between her and a young man, an actor of all work in her father's company, but, as it was deemed by her parents rash and premature, they removed her from the stage and placed her as lady's maid with a Mrs. Greathead, of Guy's Cliff, in Warwickshire. Her enthusiasm for her destined profession, however, suffered no diminution, and it is some encouragement to conscious talent to know that, at this period, she applied for an engagement to Garrick, and was rejected. In her eighteenth year she was married to Siddons, her Romeo, with the consent of her parents, and soon after made her appearance on the stage at Cheltenham. In this situation she obtained the patronage of the first Earl of Aylesbury, who being not only a man of taste,

but, what was of more importance, a nobleman, recommended her to Garrick, and induced him to request Sir Henry Bate Dudley, then only the Rev. Mr. Bate, to attend her performances, and report upon her merits.

Bate executed his mission with discernment. He saw Mrs. Siddons in various characters, but was most struck with her in Rosiland, a part which, at her age, and in her then uncertain fortunes, she sustained with that mingled tenderness and spirit which makes it one of the finest and most difficult, though seemingly one of the easiest of all Shakspeare's characters. It so convinced him of her merits, that he persuaded her to proceed to London, and urged Garrick to grant her an opportunity of appearing before the public, confident that her talents would secure her an engagement. On Friday, the 29th of December 1775, she accordingly made her first appearance at Drury Lane, and, with that correctness of taste for which she was ever distinguished, she chose the temperate part of Portia in the *Merchant of Venice*. It was not then the custom to bespeak the approbation of the public by any of those numerous artifices with which the world has since become familiar, but nevertheless, Mrs. Siddons was received with so much distinction that, on the Tuesday following, she again repeated the part.

I am not one of those who believe that Garrick was actuated by jealousy in keeping back Mrs. Siddons; for whatever may have been his own merit as a performer, he certainly was not very perspicacious in discerning that of others; he had, moreover, too much regard for his pecuniary interest to have withheld Mrs. Siddons from the public, had he discovered the extent of her powers. The nature of the loose agreement with Mr. Bate, to afford her an opportunity of being seen by a London audience, may have also tended to prevent her from getting into any of those parts which best suited her talents; and certain it is, that with all genius there are cases in which it will scarcely rise to mediocrity, and yet possess at the time a latent energy capable of the most astonishing effects. Mrs. Siddons performed often, but she was only admired as a beautiful woman; she appeared in no character which afforded her an opportunity of showing what she could do. Those who have accused Garrick of having repressed her powers, forget that the audience saw as imperfectly as he did the energy which she was capable of exerting. The fact seems to have been, that Garrick was disposed to consider comedy as the forte of the Tragic Muse, and it must therefore be regarded as an instance of favour that he revived *The Suspicious Husband* on purpose for her Mrs. Strietland, and played Ranger himself to her, old as he then was, and the part requiring youthful buoyancy and ease. It should also be recollected that the impression which Garrick had received of Mrs. Siddons' capacity was derived from the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Bate, and he had preferred her performance of Rosiland to all the other parts in which she had appeared before him.

I cannot, indeed, in any degree accede to the correctness of the theatrical tradition, that Garrick did not justice to the powers of Mrs. Siddons, for he revived, after several years' suspense, *Richard the Third*, and gave her the part of Lady Anne to his own character of

the usurper. It may be true that Mrs. Siddons herself felt she had not been well used, but that feeling might proceed from a consciousness of possessing talent which had not been called forth. Ignorance, however, of what she was capable of achieving would more clearly explain the cause of her comparative failure than any invidious motive on the part of the manager, who had a clear interest in her success. In two of Garrick's revived plays she was chosen to act the most distinguished parts with himself, and her name was printed in large type on the bills, an index of no small importance, at least, in green-room estimation.

When Mrs. Siddons left Drury Lane she accepted an engagement at Birmingham, and Henderson has the honour of first discovering there her great powers, in the summer of 1776, when he pronounced that she would never be surpassed; indeed, he wrote immediately to the manager of the Bath theatre, to engage her without delay. The fame she acquired at Bath prepared the metropolitan playgoers for her second appearance; and accordingly on the 10th of October 1782, she returned to the stage of Drury Lane theatre, then under the management of King, and took the part of Isabella, in *The Fatal Marriage*. After having performed Isabella eight times before the 30th of October, she came out on that night as Euphrasia, in *The Grecian Daughter*, with scarcely less distinction; whatever, indeed, was less splendid in the part must be ascribed to the author. The text of Murphy could not delight like the simplicity of Southerne, but the performance had all the pathos and power in an equally transcendent degree with that of Isabella.

Her third appearance was in *Jane Shore*, a drama, which with scarcely more merit than its national and historical associations, has, from its first appearance, always maintained a respectable place on the stage. The effects of Mrs. Siddons' acting in the fifth act, are the only evidences that can be now referred to in proof of her greatness; sobs, and shrieks, and fainting fits, and universal tears drowned the applause.

Her next part, on the 29th November, was Calista in *The Fair Penitent*. It must surprise the reader to find that Shakspeare was neglected; but it is a fact that speaks volumes of the taste which rules the stage. The text of Rowe certainly possesses many beautiful passages, and the general conception of the whole character, both in the silent action, and in the delivery of the dialogue being executed in the great style of Mrs. Siddons, made it decidedly the noblest part in which she had appeared in London. She chose the part of Belvidera for her first benefit, for her attractions had proved so great, that she was allowed two, and her weekly salary was increased. For her second benefit she chose Congreve's *Mourning Bride*, and was the Zara.

These six parts were all that Mrs. Siddons acted during the first winter. Isabella was considered the chief of them in effect, and that can easily be conceived, as it is more pregnant with simplicity, which was ever the grand feature of Mrs. Siddons' style—in addition to that visible intellectual conception, if the expression may be used, in the accuracy of which she could have no superior. At the end of

the season she went to Dublin where her brother John was engaged for three years, and where, now ripening into fame, she grew as successful as in London. On her return to the metropolis, she visited Dr. Johnson, who says in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, "Mrs. Siddons, in her visit to me, behaved with great modesty and propriety, and left nothing behind her to be censured or despised. Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corrupters of mankind, seem to have depraved her. I shall be glad to see her again. Mrs. Siddons and I talked of plays, and she told me her intention of exhibiting this winter the characters of Constance, Katherine, and Isabella, in Shakspeare." On this occasion the Doctor was gallant. When she came into the room, there happened to be no chair ready, "Madam," said he, "you who so often occasion a want of seats to other people, will the more easily excuse the want of one yourself."

Among the compliments paid to Mrs. Siddons was the crowning one, as I doubt not the players deemed it—the presence of the court at each of her characters during the first season—and her being afterwards appointed reading preceptress to the Princesses. The greatest compliment, however, was paid in the justness of sentiment with which she was uniformly regarded—calm admiration, and anxiety, with the profoundest sympathy, were her constant attendants. Those paroxysms of rapture, with which the vulgar and fantastical idolize some kinds of theatric talent, are proofs rather of its mediocrity, than of excellence. Judicious admiration is a quiet feeling, and the correctness of taste with which this gifted lady was through life regarded, was something akin to the calm delight with which the works of Shakspeare and Milton are studied and enjoyed.

On the 3rd November she played Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, a part well calculated to bring out the same class of feelings in a higher degree, that made her formerly take Portia, earnestness and dignity, and enabled the soul "sitting in her eye," to speak far more than the poet has or could have expressed. The first appearance of Mrs. Siddons and her brother John was in *The Gamester*, herself as Mrs. Beverley, and he as the infatuated husband. But although Mrs. Siddons' walk was with the greatest parts on the stage, it must not be forgotten that there are characters besides them in other dramas of the golden age which require powers as great as she had displayed. It is, however, the system of the managers to attend only to what are called stock pieces, reducing the stage to a mere arena of competition for performers to try their comparative strength—a system injurious to the players, and niggardly to the public.

In 1784 the malicious demon, the shadow of Merit, was discovered following Mrs. Siddons, and with so much effect, that she found herself obliged to address the audience, even after those who were supposed to have cause of complaint, had acquitted her.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"The kind and flattering partiality which I have uniformly experienced in this place, would make the present interruption distressing to me indeed, were I in the slightest degree conscious of having deserved your censure. I feel no such consciousness. The stories which have been circulated against me are calumnies. When



they shall be proved to be true, my aspersers will be justified : but till then, my respect for the public leads me to be confident that I shall be protected from unmerited insult."

This address in her own case was delivered with all the dignity with which she sustained the part of Shakspeare's *Isabella*. But the firmness which sustained her before the audience, failed when she retired to her dressing-room, and the manager was obliged to solicit a short indulgence till she had recovered from her agitation. In the course of the same year she visited Edinburgh, where she performed eleven nights, and since that period it has become a portion of the players' creed, that the Edinburgh audience is the most tasteful and judicious in the United Kingdom ; an opinion which is probably not altogether unfounded, for a larger portion of the inhabitants of that city have literary habits than perhaps those of any other, with the same degree of practical knowledge of the world and the various phases of man. It enables them to appreciate the beauties of the text with more acumen, while the advantages which they share in common with other places, give them the power of judging as to the fitness of the feelings with which the sentiments are expressed. But although the triumph of Mrs. Siddons was complete during her first great season in London, it was not until she had appeared as *Lady Macbeth* that all the critics concurred in her indisputable supremacy.

"When I first saw her in that character," says a journalist, "it was at Durham, at a time of life when the youthful mind receives its most lasting impressions, and in the course of a journey, undertaken with two schoolfellows, for the express purpose of visiting those border antiquities which Sir Walter Scott has since elevated to an equal degree of interest with the storied scenes of Greece and Italy. But as I am at no time liable to be very deeply affected by the first sight of the most remarkable objects—the effect grows upon me, whether of distaste or admiration—I was not greatly struck with the first appearance of Mrs. Siddons in the scene. Her figure, sublime as it then was, only came up to my expectation : perhaps I felt she was too great for the place. This might be a physical effect, arising from the relative size of the stage compared with herself ; but I might be justified in ascribing it to a romantic perception of the majesty of her own grandeur, as the Greeks thought the *Minerva* of *Phidias* filled the whole temple. She entered, according to the tragedy, reading the letter. It was evident by her manner that *Lady Macbeth* had previously seen something in the letter which had so affected her, that she had instinctively come forward two or three paces from the spot where she had first opened it. But when she came to "they made themselves air," she paused for an instant, as if doubtful of the term employed, and then uttered the word *AIR* in a tone of wonder. From that moment her voice assumed a more earnest accent, and I would say the demon of the character took possession of her. I cannot, at this distance of time, and through the long vista of events on which memory looks back, describe any thing in her general performance which affected me so much as the low deep accent of apprehension, or of conscious conspiracy which she sustained

throughout, especially as it influenced the utterance of her Medean invocation to the

‘Spirits that tend on mortal thought,’

and still more in the subsequent scene, where she chastises, with her valour, the hesitation of Macbeth. The manner in which she delivered the speech—

‘I have been a mother,’

has ever since pealed in the echoes of my remembrance as something indescribable; so far from impressing me with any thing of “a fiend-like woman,” as I have heard her involuntarily called, it filled me with mysterious wonder that there should be a being of such incomprehensible strength of resolution. When Macbeth exclaims, in his admiration—

‘Bring forth men children only,’

he seemed but to illustrate my own feeling. The magnificence of her descent from the throne at the banquet, was another example of the previously inconceivable sublimity of the genius that directed her conception of the part; and perhaps, as such, was not inferior to her somnambulism. Whether her action in the dream scene—that brightest spark of the poet’s fire—was according to the phenomenon of the disease, I would not examine; for it was so tremendous, that, with such a character, gnawed with the Promethean agonies of crime, it ought to have been natural. Through all the performance of the evening she spoke as it were in a suppressed voice, that seemed to lend additional poetry to the text, and which one scarcely could give in mere writing. I afterwards, however, suspected it was accidental. Henry Siddons, her son, who performed Macbeth, was not a judicious actor; his emphasis was too boisterous, and it might be that she assumed that under-tone, which seemed so poetical, from a desire to moderate his loud vehemence; at least, I never heard her speak in the same key again.”

Of Mrs. Siddons’ attainments in comedy I shall make no other remark than that surely it was a mystery to think it possible she could ever be endured in it. Nature was insulted when it was imagined that she could laugh otherwise than in scorn. Endured she no doubt was, and admired too, but it was profanation; she had no fit attributes but the dagger and the bowl. I have had more than once occasion to observe that a player’s life, when the goal of London approbation has been attained, becomes tame and stale, but, it sometimes happens, that circumstances arise which render it remarkable. In the history of Mrs. Siddons there is an incident of this kind, highly illustrative of her prudence and good sense.

During the illness of George III. in 1788, she was among the earliest to discover his mental aberration, and the circumstances which first attracted her attention to it was an occurrence on the part of the King himself which, perhaps, had he been of a different character, would not have so particularly excited her surprise. In her occasional attendance at the palaces, as preceptress in elocution to the princesses, His Majesty always treated her with uncommon

attention. But, on the occasion alluded to, he put into her hands a sheet of paper merely subscribed with his name,—with what intent can only be conjectured, but with the discretion which characterised her general conduct, she delivered it to the Queen, who received it with dignity, and with the delicacy that Mrs. Siddons justly merited. The incident, considering the King's strict character, was at the time regarded with apprehension, but it deserves attention in another point of view; for had there been the slightest hesitation on the part of Mrs. Siddons, had she not gone at once to her Majesty, from herself, and unadvised, the motives of her decision might have become questionable. It is, therefore, one of those facts which show how little the profession ought to be blamed for the errors of individuals. Indeed, why should it ever be so, for the very end and business of the players should make them familiar with highmindedness and virtuous demeanour? Mrs. Siddons, in this incident, only illustrated the dignity of her real character, by showing that the sentiments she often expressed, as an agent, were congenial to her own personal feelings.

In performing Katharine in *Henry VIII.*—a character depicting simple dignity, her majestic form gave all the greatness that a perusal of the play would seem to require for an adequate representative. But still more with her intellectual expression of countenance, it became only inferior to the sublimity of Lady Macbeth, though of a very different kind indeed. The manner in which she retired from the trial scene was equal to her grandeur at the banquet in *Macbeth*, and the sensibility with which she uttered,

“God help me!”

as she quitted the room, was, perhaps, the most exquisitely just expression of grief and feeling ever uttered in representation. One would, however, only tire in prolonging the description of her dignity and sensibility. Her excellence in these two great and rare qualities constituted the main ingredient of her amazing sorcery.

But the intelligent sensibility which shone so beautifully on the stage, and so fascinated her auditors, was, in some respects, a baneful gift to herself, especially in the circumstances of that trial of the heart when she lost her two daughters. The early fate of these singularly beautiful young ladies, in itself deeply affecting, was enhanced to the sympathy of the world, by the romance in which it was involved. More perhaps, it would be injudicious to say here, as the story of the late Sir Thomas Lawrence's attachment to them both has recently been told by his biographer with sufficient minuteness; a letter, however, of their mother, on the occasion, can from no sketch of her life be properly omitted, not only for the beauty of the spirit that breathes in it, but the almost Shakspearian dignity of the composition. It will suggest to posterity some idea of her poetical greatness of character, when those who still remember it can no longer bear witness to the justness of the admiration of their contemporaries.

“The testimony of the wisdom of all ages,” says Mrs. Siddons, “from the foundation of the world to this day, is childishness and

folly, if happiness be anything more than a name : and I am sure our own experience will not enable us to refute the opinion ; no, no, it is the inhabitant of a better world. Content, the offspring of Moderation, is all we ought to aspire to here, and moderation will be our best and surest guide to that happiness to which she will most assuredly conduct us. If Mr. L—— think himself unfortunate, let him look on me and be silent. The inscrutable ways of Providence ! Two lovely creatures gone, and another is just arrived from school, with all the dazzling frightful sort of beauty that irradiated the countenance of Maria, and makes me shudder when I look at her. I feel myself, like poor Niobe, grasping to her bosom the last and youngest of her children, and like her, look every moment for the vengeful arrow of destruction.”

Independently of the severe calamity which befell Mrs. Siddons in the loss of her daughters, it has been said that she was latterly not happy in her domestic circumstances ; but into topics of that private nature the public has no right to search. We have only to consider her as an actress, and in that capacity she was beyond all praise. In what other respects her intellectual accomplishments may have been eminent, I have no desire to ascertain—it is only as the representative of the conceptions of the great dramatic poets that I wish to consider her, and I regard all the other incidents of her life, but as those minor accidents of situation and fortune, which are commonly rejected in biographical memoirs.

On the 29th June 1812, she took leave of the public. The performance of the evening was *Macbeth*. In the large audience there appeared to be a strong feeling of regret that, yet in possession of such visible energy, she should have felt herself so summoned by Nature, as to think of retiring. The occasion was distinguished by an instance of good taste on the part of the audience, which has no precedent in the annals of the stage. When she had retired from the sublime scene of the dream, a general movement was observed in the house, the remainder of the play was dismissed, and the spectators only lingered till she had repeated a short address.

She, however, came forward for the benefit of her brother, in the year following, also for the same purpose in 1816 ; and, at the request of the Princess Charlotte, she played again in the same year ; but the Princess was unable to be present. Of her life in retirement the public heard little. But her name is never mentioned without expressions of admiration, when the parts in which she excelled are spoken of ; nor without a lamentation, that such excellence in art can be seen no more. Her death took place on the 8th June 1831, at her residence in Upper Baker Street, to the deep regret of a wide circle of admirers.

THE END.





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